



Mhysa by GreenEyesFreckles87

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Summary: Belle is Bill and Georgie's big sister, who witnesses the latter's horrifying death at the hands of Pennywise one stormy October day. Sent to stay with a family friend to recover from the traumatizing event, Belle returns to Derry in June, ready to hunt down and kill the thing that took the little brother she loved so much, aided by Bill and the rest of the Losers Club. Patrick/OC

1. Georgie

- Author's Note - Greetings, fellow IT fans! So, on September 8th, I went and saw IT for the first time, and, like the rest of you, I absolutely LOVED it! That night, the idea for this story came to me in the form of a dream. I was going to start writing it the very next day, but I live in Florida, and, as I'm sure most of you know, we got hit by Hurricane Irma that weekend. So, that put a hitch in my writing plans. But, Irma's long gone now, and waiting to write has allowed me to think up new ideas, and further develop the ones I already had.

The role of Belle is played by a young woman named Sarah Tran. She's known on Instagram as sarahannabella, and is most famous for her long, beautiful hair. She is also one of the sweetest people I've ever met, so I knew she'd be perfect for the role of Bill and Georgie's older sister.

I've made her the Cover Image for this story, and have also added a link to her Instagram to my Profile, where you'll also find ones for other original characters, a few of which are mentioned below, while others will be brought in later.

If you're a Game of Thrones fan, you'll recognize the title of the story, but, for those of you who aren't, "Mhysa" means "Mother" in a language in the books and on the TV Series, and, as you'll see as the story progresses, Belle is very much a Mother to all of the children (even Bill and Georgie, who are, of course, her brothers), mainly because, aside from Belle, Bill, and Georgie, all of the Losers Club either don't have Moms, or have very crappy ones, but I didn't want to name the story "Mother", especially since there's currently a (really bad) movie out right now entitled that, so I thought it'd be interesting to use a different, almost Mystical take on the term, which is even more fitting considering the story of "IT" is pretty mystical itself.

I also decided to re-cast Bill and Georgie's parents. They're literally only seen in one scene each in the movie, and, since I plan on them having a much larger role in the story, I decided to re-cast them with better people.

The Father is played by Liam Neeson and is named Bryan, and the

Mother is played by Maggie Q and is named Katherine. Maggie Q is of Vietnamese descent, as is Sarah Tran. Also, Liam Neeson and Maggie Q fit perfectly for the backstory I came up with for their characters.

Lastly, I, of course, would LOVE to receive reviews! Please be kind though. I don't mind constructive criticism, but simply being straight out mean is unnecessary.

With that, here's the first Chapter. I hope you enjoy, and, if you do, PLEASE review!

October

Seventeen year old Belle Denbrough stood in the garage of her family's house, dressed in a fitted black tank top, black capris sweatpants, and a pair of athletic tennis shoes, her seemingly endless silky chestnut tresses pulled up into a ponytail at the back center of her head, an action which barely shortened their length.

"You know Mom doesn't want us doing this," Belle said to her Dad, who was standing in front of her, dressing her hands in the pair of boxing gloves, his workout bag gently swaying back and forth from where it hung from the ceiling behind them, while his own pair sat on the nearby weight bench.

"I am teaching you to protect yourself, Ellie," replied the former Marine, who'd been born and raised in Derry, before leaving at 18 to join the Military, mainly as a way to see the World outside of his small town, and, upon being stationed in Honolulu, Hawaii, met and fell in love with his wife and the Mother of his three kids, Katherine, who was serving in the Navy at the time.

After getting married a few years later, they soon found out that Katherine was pregnant, and decided to retire, then move back to Bryan's home town, in order to give their child, and any others that came along in the future, a normal, safe life.

"Especially with you going off to College soon," Bryan went on, sighing softly.

"To **Harvard**, Dad," Belle laughed. "What's at Harvard that I need to learn to protect myself from?"

"Hey," Bryan said, his tone suddenly even more serious than it had been, as he lifted his blue gaze to his daughter's beautiful face. She was his only baby girl, and he was therefor naturally much more protective of her than Bill and Georgie, despite her being the oldest. "You listen to your old man. I know most everything I say goes in one ear." He lifted a hand off hers in order to tap one side of her head. "And out the other." He moved that hand back down, in order to raise the other, and tap the opposite side of her head, actions that caused her to giggle, and attempt to swat his limb away with a single of her gloved ones. "But I know the World. And there are bad people **everywhere. Even** at a prestigious school like Harvard. Look at everything we've heard coming out of Hudson. So, just humor me, okay?"

"Okay, Dad," Belle sighed, which earned her a smile from Bryan, before he returned to finishing up with her gloves.

"I hope you know how proud we are of you, Ellie," said Bryan, as he stepped away in order to fetch his own pair. "Your Mom and I have always wanted the best for you and your brothers, ever since we found out each of you were coming. And now, look at you. Early acceptance into Harvard. You're going to be a Doctor."

Belle knew her Father was being completely serious. Despite being a Marine, he was an affectionate and loving man when it came to his family, but he still didn't like his wife and three children to see him get choked up, which he clearly was now, as she could tell his eyes were glistening, even though he was over by his weight bench, which was currently tucked into a dark corner, since he'd moved it to give them more space with the punching bag.

"If I **survive** the years it takes to become a Doctor," Belle spoke up. "Four years of College, four years of Medical School, up to five years of Residency, a year, or even two, of which is Interning."

"Hey," Bryan repeated, moving back over to his daughter, tucking his gloves under one arm, in order to reach out, and grasp his daughter by her slender upper arms, as he met her deep brown eyes with his

own gentle blue. "You're gonna do it, sweetheart. Your Mom and I just know it. Your brothers too. We're all behind you, 100%. Okay?" Pausing, he waited for her to nod and smile, before he did the same, and straightened up, resuming his actions of putting on his gloves. "Good. 'Cause we're counting on you to take care of all of us when we get old."

Belle scoffed softly, rolling her rich chocolate hued orbs. "Well, I was kind of hoping Bill and Georgie would at least take care of *me*."

"I'm sure they would," chuckled Bryan, moving over to the punching bag, which his daughter followed him to, and he took up a position one side of it, holding it still with his hands. "Those brothers of yours idolize you, Ellie." Taking in a deep breath, he nodded at Belle. "Now, get into the stance I taught you." He watched her do so, spreading her feet shoulder width apart, then lifting up her arms, bent at the elbows, relaxed, not locked, gloved hands held in front of herself. "Good. And. . . go!"

Bryan continued to hold the bag in place, as his daughter began taking hits and kicks at it, smiling in pride when she actually did so with enough force to jostle him a bit on his feet.

It had begun to pour down rain outside when Belle and her Father were done with their training session. Bryan had even felt so confident in his daughter's growing abilities that he'd switched her from gloves to tape, as he put punching mitts on his hands, for her to hit and kick instead of the bag, to get a better experience with a more mobile target, while he also took careful swings at her, which she ducked, since they had a routine now they'd follow, much like a dance.

"Well, you'll probably be sore tomorrow," Bryan said, as he wiped his sweaty brow with a towel, while Belle removed the tape from her hands. "But we'll stick primarily with the gloves. If you're gonna be a surgeon, we need to protect those little limbs of yours." He nodded at her hands, and she sent him a look, causing him to chuckle softly.

"All right, kid," he continued, slinging his towel over his shoulder, then moving into place beside his daughter. "Time to hit the

showers."

Before they could get to the door that led inside the house from the garage, it opened, and Katherine stood there, a sight that caused Belle's smile at her Father's words to fade, as she knew they were in trouble. Well, more him than her.

"The boys and I were wondering where you two have been," said Katherine, as she leaned against the doorframe, and crossed her arms over her chest.

"Katherine-" Bryan began, sighing softly, but his wife cut him off, her dark brown eyes moving to their daughter.

"Baby, you promised you'd work on your acceptance letter today," she said.

"I am," Belle replied, before correcting herself. "I will. I just wanted to train with Dad a bit first."

Katherine nodded, a fake smile appearing on her beautiful face, as she turned her eyes onto her husband. "And how did today's session go?"

"Good," Bryan said proudly. "Our daughter's a natural."

"I'm going to hit the showers," Belle spoke up, wanting out of this uncomfortable situation as soon as possible, and she quickly brushed past her Mother, then bolted upstairs.

"I thought we talked about this," Katherine spoke to her husband, once their daughter was out of earshot. "Multiple times, in fact."

"Oh, Kat, come on," sighed Bryan. "She's got two Military experts as parents. You don't think she should capitalize on that?"

"We left the Military when we got pregnant with Belle specifically so she could have a life away from all of that," Katherine replied.

"Please, baby," Bryan went on. "We know better than anyone what's out there. She should be able to protect herself."

"From what?" Katherine asked, shrugging her slender shoulders. "Again, we came back to your small home town, where you said nothing interesting ever happens, so our children would be safe. What does Belle need to be so afraid of here? She's going to be leaving for College next year. What then? Are you gonna start training Bill too? What about Georgie?"

"Maybe I should," answered Bryan, with a defiant shrug of his own shoulders. "You really think that rhyme you taught Bill is gonna protect him from those pricks at his school?"

"If he works at it, yes," Katherine snapped, moving out of the doorway, and closer to her husband, as her slender arms dropped to her sides. "And it's not something I just made up, Bryan! That "rhyme" has helped a lot of children with their stutter! But, by all means, teach our son that it's better not to overcome his problems, but to beat them to a bloody pulp!"

When Belle got out of the shower, she dressed in all black attire once more, putting on black socks, black skinny jeans, and a black t-shirt. Even her bra and panties beneath the outer layer of clothing were black.

She'd washed her seemingly endlessly long chocolate brown tresses, so they hung wet all down her back, and over the front of her shoulders, as she absently towed them dry, while padding down the hallway to Bill's room, where she could hear both of her brothers' voices coming from.

Stepping into the open doorway, Belle smiled softly at the sight of the two, Bill sitting cross legged on his bed, surrounded by his snotty balled up tissues, while Georgie stood nearby, watching his older brother fold a thick piece of notebook paper into something.

"How are my boys doing?" she asked, drawing both of their attention over to her.

"Bill's making me a boat!" Georgie exclaimed happily, rushing over to Belle, who immediately bent down, slipping her slender hands beneath her littlest brother's arms, then using the hold to lift him up,

where she settled him against one hip, while he wrapped his tiny limbs around her neck and wet hair.

"Oh, yeah?" Belle inquired, as she secured her hands beneath his bottom, while shifting her deep brown eyes from his adorable little face to Bill on his bed.

"Do you wanna come race it with me, Ellie?" asked Georgie. "Bill can't, 'cause he said he's dying."

Belle sent her sick brother a look, even though she knew he'd been joking, before returning her gaze to Georgie. "I would love to come with you, sweetie, but Mom's been on me about getting my acceptance letter done."

"S-S-S-Seriously?" Bill spoke from over on his bed. "We still h-h-have more th-than half a sc-school year and s-s-s-summer."

"Well, Harvard was kind enough to give me early acceptance," responded Belle. "And they don't do that often, so an early acceptance **letter** seems only right." Taking in a deep breath, she moved her gaze between her brothers. "Besides, the sooner I get it done, the sooner I get Mom off of my back. Then you two can have me all to yourselves." She smiled brightly, as she gaze Georgie a playful jostle in her arms, an action that caused him to giggle.

"Okay, go get the wax, Georgie," Bill said, as he finished up folding the paper boat.

The little boy's adorable face fell at this, and he flicked a fearful glance at the open doorway behind Belle, before looking back at his big brother. "In the cellar?"

"You want it to f-f-fl-float, don't you?" Bill asked, offering his little brother a smile.

"Fine," Georgie sighed, and he slid down Belle's body, as she bent slightly to set him on his feet.

Belle watched him grab his walkie off of Bill's desk, before he began out of the room, and she quickly spun, then reach out to playfully, quickly pinch his bottom with both hands, actions that earned her

fresh giggles from him, while he picked up his pace, rushing out of the room to avoid further tickling.

Smiling softly, Belle turned back to face Bill, and walked over to his bed.

"How are you doing, tough guy?" she asked, as she sat down beside him, tucking one leg under the other, while it hung off the bed's edge, then wrapping one slender arm around Bill's shoulders, leaning in to kiss his forehead, before she moved her hand there to feel for his temperature.

"I f-f-f-feel bet-better," Bill replied, looking up at his older sister, and smiling softly.

"Yeah?" Belle said, before she began rubbing his warm forehead with her thumb, which was cool from the cold shower she'd gotten. "Well, your temperature's down. That's a good sign." Wrapping her arm around his shoulders once more, she hugged him against her side. "Means you get to go to school on Monday."

"Hurray," Bill responded sarcastically, while she smiled, before he grabbed a black permanent marker from his array of things on the bed with him, pulled off the cap, then bent down to write "SS Georgie" on the paper boat.

Once Georgie returned with the wax, Belle left the boys to finish up the boat together, and headed to her room, completing toweling her hair, before she got to work on brushing it, a task she was just about done with, when she heard her phone vibrate on her desk, where she had it plugged in next to her laptop.

Tossing her brush onto her bed, where the wet towel hung off of the side, she walked over to her desk, and picked up her phone, unlocking it, before opening the text message she got, smiling brightly when she saw it was from her best friend, Emma, who was sharing the excited news that the book store she worked part time at had lost power due to the storm, which meant she got to go home early.

After responding, Belle clicked off her phone, and was just about to set it on the desk, when she heard the front door open and close, and she walked over to her room's windows, which faced the front of the house, to see Georgie outside, in his green rain boots and yellow slicker, clutching his new toy, and waving up at the house, to both her window and to Bill's, which were side by side.

Smiling softly, Belle waved back, then blew her little brother a kiss, hearing Bill say, "Stay safe." into his own walkie, to the one Georgie had in his pocket, in the next room, before he ran off with his paper boat.

She watched her little brother until he was out of sight, before she shrugged off the usual feeling she got whenever he or Bill weren't with her, that of anxiety and an inability to help but worry, and made her way back to her desk, setting her phone down onto its surface, before she pulled out her chair, and settled, lifting up the top of her laptop, bringing it out of sleep mode.

Belle had just opened up what little she'd gotten done on her acceptance letter to Harvard, when her Mom appeared in her doorway.

"Hey, sweetie," Katherine spoke, leaning against the doorframe, and offering her only daughter a smile.

"Hey, Mom," replied Belle, not looking over at her, as she began typing. "Did you leave Dad at least one testicle?"

Sighing softly, Katherine pushed off from the doorframe, and made her way into the room. "You know, couples fight." Stepping over to her daughter's bed, she moved aside the wet towel and hair brush, in order to sit, where she had a view of her baby girl's back. "I'm just sorry you and your brothers have to hear them."

"Why is it such a big deal that Dad's teaching me how to protect myself?" Belle asked, turning around in her chair to face her Mom.

"It's not *what* he's doing, Ellie," responded Katherine. "It's that he's doing it *period*. He told me he wouldn't train you, then he went behind my back, and did it anyway."

"Well, it's not like we said we were going to the movies, and went to a gym instead," said Belle. "We've just been in the garage, Mom. Besides, don't you want me to be safe?"

"Of course I do, sweetie," Katherine replied, before shrugging her slender shoulders. "But you've been safe your whole life here in Derry."

"Dad wants me to be able to protect myself when I go off to College," Belle said. "Besides, do you really believe that **Bill's** been safe? He gets picked on **every** day at school because of his stutter."

"And that **kills** me," Katherine somewhat angrily responded, the pain of her son being tormented evident in her dark brown eyes, and on every inch of beautiful face. "But Bullies have been around as long as time itself has existed. I don't want your brother thinking violence is the answer."

"So, if it ever came to it, he should just roll over and die," Belle said, standing up from her chair, then turning to walk over to her closet.

"I didn't say that," sighed Katherine, before her brow furrowed when she saw her daughter proceed to pull out, and put on, her bright pink rain boots. "Belle, where are you going? Please, I don't want you to leave angry with me."

"I'm going to play with my little brother. Georgie went to race a boat in the rain that Bill made him," replied Belle, straightening up in order to grab a black hoodie that was too big on her, but she didn't own a slicker, plus she didn't care about getting wet, especially since her hair already still was from her shower. "He asked me to go with him, and I said no, since I promised you I'd work on my acceptance letter."

Zippping up the hoodie, she made sure all of her long hair was tucked beneath it, then flicked one last glance at Katherine. "We'll be back soon."

"Belle!" Katherine called out to her daughter, before sighing yet again, when she simply ignored her, as she left her bedroom.

Stepping outside, Belle was almost immediately soaked, but she didn't care, nor did she lift up the hood on Killian's hoodie to even attempt to shield herself a bit from the cool rain water, which she tilted her head back in order to enjoy the feeling of it hitting her face.

Taking in a deep breath, she lifted a slender hand to wipe away the water from her eyes, before she headed down to the end of the driveway, and turned right, following the path she'd seen Georgie take, before he'd gotten out of sight.

The roads were almost flooded, the rain water collected against the curb, until it could be freed by the sewer drains, which were working overtime in this storm, especially since the city was working on some areas, evident by the "DERRY PUBLIC WORKS" sawhorses, and green rain resistant covered stacks of tools and such that littered the streets.

Belle followed the flow of the rain water, knowing that would catch her up to Georgie, and, when she made her way around a pile of the aforementioned stacks of things belonging to the city, a soft smile lit up her beautiful face, when she heard, even over the sound of the wind and the rain, the familiar laughter of her little brother. He had the cutest laugh she'd ever heard, and she would know it anywhere.

Turning the corner onto Witcham, where it met up with Jackson Street, her brow furrowed, and her happiness faded, when she saw Georgie's small form crouched by a sewer drain, the one right by Mrs. Sterling's house, where the kind older lady and her tabby cat Jack lived. Mrs. Sterling was a Widow, and she'd acted as a babysitter for all three children throughout their lives. Her own kids had moved away from Derry, though would visit often, aside from the daughter, Nyleen, who'd gone missing in the late 80s when she was only 4, and had never been seen again.

Belle recognized her little brother by his bright yellow rain slicker, and her heart sank when she realized he must be where he is because his boat had been washed down the drain by the rain.

Sighing softly, she started toward him, ready to console him over the loss, knowing he'd be upset, thinking Bill would be mad at him, but also prepared walk him home, saying they'd dry off, change into new clothes, then warm up from the rain and spend some time together

by cuddling up in her bed with his favorite snack, popcorn, and watch a movie. Bill was hopefully taking a nap, as he'd been up all night, sneezing his brains out, as he'd put it.

But Belle's brow soon furrowed afresh, when Georgie's laughter stopped, so suddenly it was as though the sound had been stolen from the World, and she caught a glimpse of Mrs. Sterling on her front patio with Jack, putting up her porch covers, to save them from damage from the wind and rain, before she heard her little brother start talking.

She figured it was to Mrs. Sterling, until she saw the older woman move out of sight, something that, if she had been conversing with Georgie, would not only be rude, but pretty much halt the conversation, as the storm would make it hard for them to hear one another, especially since Mrs. Sterling was losing her hearing, and had recently acquired a hearing aide, which Belle knew she'd normally only wear when out, or when she had company at her home.

So, if Georgie wasn't talking to the older woman, then who? Maybe Jack. The cat **was** still gazing out through the gaps in the porch railings at the little boy, and her brother **was** an animal lover, just as she and Bill were.

But that thought, as she continued toward where Georgie was crouched, was proven not the case, when she saw her little brother move closer, then lift one of his arms, and begin to reach into the sewer drain.

"Georgie?" Belle called out to him, while she picked up her pace a bit, that feeling of anxiety and worry not only back, despite him being in her line of sight, but having returned with such a feeling of dread, her heart was beginning to pound faster than normal against her rib cage. "Georgie! What are you doing?"

He heard his big sister's voice, and looked over at her approaching form, a bright, relief filled smile alighting his adorable face when he saw her. "Belle! I'm getting my boat back!"

"Georgie, get away from there!" Belle yelled, now beginning to run

toward him. Truthfully, she had no logical reason to believe he was in danger. It's not like he could fit through the drain were he to slip, or so she thought. But, for whatever reason, she just knew she had to get to her little brother as fast as possible.

Before she could, a sound that would forever haunt her rang out through the wind and rain filled air, as Georgie screamed in complete and utter agony, and Belle couldn't help but skid to a halt, when she saw her little brother fall back from the sewer drain, now missing the arm he'd been extending into it.

His cries of pain cut through her like a hot knife, and, even as her eyes widened to a point she didn't think was possible, while her heart screeched to a halt within her chest, she found herself running toward him, her legs carrying her, while horror and shock flooded every inch of her mind, body, heart, and soul.

"Georgie!" Belle screamed, watching as her beloved little brother tried to crawl away, blood spewing from the stump a few inches from his shoulder where his little limb had been seconds ago. "Oh, my God!"

She fell to her knees as soon as she was close enough, and reached out to grab him, turning him over in her lap, where she instinctively clamped one hand over the gushing wound, while cupping a side of his adorable, agony stricken face with the other.

"Oh, my God. Oh, my God," Belle just kept repeating, trying to make sense of the situation, as she held her little brother's hystical, bleeding form in her arms, even as her own uncontrollable sobs began to overtake her. "Georgie, what happened? What happened? Oh, my God! Baby! Baby, stay with me!"

"Belle!" Georgie cried, clutching at his sister's hoddie with his now only remaining hand. "B-B-Belle, please!"

Belle choked out a sob at his despair filled pleas, then, not knowing why, she looked up. Even as the warmth of her little brother's blood seeped through her jeans, and slipped past her fingers where they held the wound, she instinctively lifted her eyes to the sewer drain, and what she saw sent her into such a state of shock, she now knew the fear a swimmer or surfer experienced when they are pulled down

by a shark. That reminder that this World is not safe, or fair, and that, at any moment, destiny could strike you down with a terrible fate.

She started to shake, and she could literally feel herself turning white, as she gazed into the milk colored face and glowing eyes of what appeared to be a clown. But a clown with rows of razor sharp teeth, similar to that *of* a shark, and a mouth that was stained with what she just knew was Georgie's blood.

Belle froze, and couldn't move a muscle. She watched as an arm, a limb clad in all white, from its sleeve, to the ruffles at its cuff, to the glove that covered its long fingered hand, reached out from the sewer drain, far past the point of a normal reach, and grabbed hold on Georgie's nearest ankle, where she sat with him several feet away.

She saw the thing, that had previously almost looked confused or even startled at the sight of her, suddenly smile, and she knew it was going to take him from her. That there was nothing she could do about it. She was going to lose Georgie. The little brother she loved so much, so much that she realized, in this moment in time, she even saw him as being her child.

Belle instinctively tightened her hold on Georgie. Her shock aside, she was going to put up a fight. Or, at least, she wanted to. But, despite her clutching at him with such strength she was sure, were he to live, he'd have bruises to show for it, the thing, the clown, whatever IT was, effortlessly pulled him, crying and bleeding, from her arms, as if she hadn't been holding onto him at all, and she made one last ditch effort for his remaining arm, but it, like everything else, was in vain.

"Belle!" Georgie screamed, a sound that soon echoed throughout the street. "Billy!"

That was the last thing Belle heard her little brother say, that was the last time she saw him, his adorable, beloved face contorted in agony, fear, and desperation, before he disappeared, pulled backward, screaming for his older siblings, that he loved and idolized so much, into the sewer drain.

Belle sat, in the wet road, soaked in rain water and Georgie's blood, the former of which was still pouring down on her from above, her eyes wide, and glued to the spot where she'd just watched her brother be torn away from her forever.

She couldn't feel a thing. Not the cold, harshness of the rain, as it hit her like knives, and numbed the parts of her body touching the concrete road, nor the still warmth of Georgie's blood that continued to seep through her clothing, staining her forever with its despair.

She couldn't speak. She couldn't cry. She couldn't move. She couldn't do anything. She just watched the rain begin to wash away the long, thick trail of blood left behind from her little brother's severed limb, as she stared at the blackness of the sewer drain, that was seemingly beginning to encroach on her like a heavy fog.

"Oh, my gosh!" Mrs. Sterling exclaimed, as she came back over to the side of the porch that faced the corner of her street, and saw Belle sitting there, surrounded by blood.

Racing inside, she grabbed her phone, dialing 911, as she burst back outside, then down the steps of her patio, and cut across her front yard, moving into the street, where she fell into a crouch next to the young woman she used to babysit.

"Sweetheart, are you all right?" Mrs. Sterling asked, lifting a hand to Belle's arm, while the phone she had pressed against the side of her face rang in her ear, awaiting pick up on the other line. "Sweetheart? Belle? Belle, are you all right? Talk to me, honey. What is it?"

But Belle didn't move a muscle, or say a single thing, even when the older woman raised her hand to touch the side of the young woman's beautiful face and soaking wet locks, the former of which was ice cold. She had gone completely catatonic, frozen in time and space by her sheer and utter shock.

"911," came a voice over Mrs. Sterling's phone, as an Operator answered the call. "What is your emergency?"

"Oh! Yes! I did an ambulance, please," Mrs. Sterling spoke.

"What's happened, Ma'am?" asked the Operator.

"I-I don't know," Mrs. Sterling exclaimed, moving her hand to Belle's back. "Something's wrong with my neighbor! She won't talk to me, and there's blood everywhere! Please, send help!"

"All right, Ma'am," replied the Operator, using the GPS from the older woman's phone to find her location. "I have Police and EMTs on route. I want you to stay on the line with me until they get there, okay?"

"Yes, of course," Mrs. Sterling said. "Just, please, hurry!"

The older woman's voice soon faded out to Belle, who seemingly went deaf, aside from the growing louder and more haunting by the second, sharp piercing noise, that sounded like the Gates of Hell itself were being opened, which rose up in her ears, while she merely continued to stare at the spot where Georgie had disappeared, blind to everything else around it, and unable to feel a single thing, aside from her sheer shock, which bled through all the way to her very soul.

- Author's Note - Well, there's Chapter One! I had such a hard time getting through Georgie's death. It's difficult enough to watch, but to write it out, and have to describe his sister being a witness to it, just made it impossibly more heartbreaking.

And, as you can tell by Belle having a phone and a laptop, I moved up the time IT is set in, from the 80s to more present day. I promise it won't change the story, and I *did* make a reference to *something* happened in the 80s, with the disappearance of Mrs. Sterling's daughter.

Also, since Belle's friend Emma was mentioned, I went ahead and added a picture of her to to my Profile, so be sure to check that out, along with all of the others.

Finally, as always, PLEASE review! I want to get started on the next Chapter as soon as possible, and knowing you've enjoyed the first one will help motivate me!

2. Welcome Home

- Author's Note - Hey, guys!

Wow, you completely blew me away with the feedback on Chapter One! So many favorites and follows, and, of course, a **HUGE** thanks to **Winchestergirl123**, **Nightingale690**, **twgreentea**, and **MedievalWarriorPrincess** for going the extra mile, and sending in a review!

I just have one note before we get into Chapter Two.

So, if you were among the first to read the first Chapter, you'll probably remember that I wrote about a character named Killian, who is Belle's boyfriend. But, after posting the first Chapter, an idea for a different boyfriend for Belle, that'll be played by a character that's already in the movie, came to me. So, to make things easier, I went back and edited Killian out of Chapter One. It truly changes little to nothing, since, as I said, he was only mentioned, but please feel free to re-read Chapter One, if you'd like, and you'll see what character from the movie will be Belle's boyfriend/love interest in this Chapter, and I'll confirm it at the very end.

With that, here's Chapter Two. I really hope you all enjoy, and, as always, **PLEASE** review!

June

Belle sat in her airline seat, watching the clouds and the land beneath them pass by through the window next to her.

After eight months in England, staying on a secluded expansive estate with family friends, she was finally returning home to Derry, for the first time since that horrifying rainy day in October.

Belle had all but had a complete mental breakdown after witnessing Georgie's death. She rarely ate, and would vomit up what she ***did*** consume, though not on purpose, it was as if her body had a mind of its own, and was turning on any form of sustenance that entered it.

She hardly ever slept, and, when she did, she'd wake the entire house with her blood curdling screams fueled by the excruciating nightmares she'd experience.

Bryan and Katherine would burst into her room, expecting to see her being murdered, only to find their daughter still asleep in bed, but seemingly trapped in her slumber, gripping her bedding in such tight fists that, even with the sheets acting as a slight barrier, she'd still have marks on her palms from her fingernails, and it more often than not took them getting physical with her in order to wake her up.

They didn't know what to do. They'd already lost one child, and now another was slipping away from them, but in the exact opposite way they'd lost Georgie. Bill was also, naturally, suffering, not only because of the loss of his little brother, but seeing what it was doing to his beloved older sister. So, Bryan and Katherine had decided that, if there was any chance of Belle recovering, it had to be away from Derry.

The former Military pair had friends all over the World, and many of them were also retired. One in particular had an estate in the gorgeous English Countryside, where he raised horses and dogs for show. He had experience helping soldiers with PTSD, and that was the closest thing they could describe what Belle was going through, so they'd sent her to him, and that's where she'd stayed for eight months.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we hope you've had an enjoyable flight. The Captain has now turned on the 'Fasten Your Seatbelts' sign," came the voice of one of the Flight Attendant's over the plane's intercom, tearing Belle from her thoughts. "Please fasten your seatbelts, and prepare for landing. As always, thank you for flying Delta Airlines."

Taking in a deep breath, Belle secured her seatbelt across her slender waist, then laid her head back against the rest behind it, as the plane descended into Portland International Airport.

Bryan and Katherine stood outside, by where the shuttles, Ubers, and other cars would pull up to let people off, or pick them up. They didn't want to overwhelm their daughter by waiting for her right at

the gate of her flight. They wanted to give her the time and space to get off the plane, collect her luggage, and come outside to meet them when she was ready.

Not to say they weren't anxious, almost vibrating with the combined excitement and nervousness of seeing their beloved baby girl for the first time in eight months, and the pair stood side by side, where Bryan had one arm wrapped around Katherine's slender shoulders, while she clutched at the front of his button down with one hand, and the back of it with her other.

The doors nearest to them slide open, and a fresh group of people came pouring out, mixed in with those trying to get inside, and Bryan looked for Belle, being 6'4" in height, and therefor able to see over the heads of most people.

But he didn't need to look long, before the crowd parted enough to reveal he and Katherine's daughter. She had an airport employee at her side, pushing the cart her luggage was piled onto, as she'd naturally had to take a lot, since she'd been gone more than half a year.

She'd truthfully only packed for a few months, and, when she'd needed more time, she'd gone shopping for new clothes and such, as well as additional luggage, so she could bring it all back with her. She was most defiantly a girl in the sense that she loved to shop.

Bryan and Katherine had opened a bank account overseas in Belle's name, and deposited a fair amount of funds into it for her, so money hadn't been a problem. It never really had for the family, as Bryan owned his own construction company, and Katherine had started a clothing line, which was successful enough that it was sold in a lot of high end stores all across the World.

Belle wore a long sleeve Navy henley from Abercrombie & Fitch, with most of the buttons undone, revealing the top of a lacy black bra, somewhat baggy grey jean capris, folded up a couple of times at the ankle, and black and white Converse sneakers with white ankle socks, while her seemingly endlessly long chestnut curls were down, hanging over her slender shoulders, and down her delicate back, as usual.

She looked a bit tired, but, otherwise, perfectly healthy. Her weight was back to where it'd been when Georgie died, and her already milky white skin had returned to its normal almost ethereal pale shade, as oppose to the practically pasty death-like hue it'd had eight months ago.

Coming to a halt a few feet from her parents, Belle thanked the airport employee, who gave her a smile and a nod, before heading back inside, while she turned to face her parents, whom she sent the strongest smile she could muster, as she rested her slender hand on the strap of her carry on bag, the only piece of luggage she carried.

"Hi, Mom," she said. "Hi, Dad."

Katherine smiled back, her eyes glistening with tears, and she moved forward, where she lifted her hands to cup either side of her daughter's face, gazing into it for a few seconds, as if to make sure she was real, before she closed her eyes, which squeezed the tears free, and moved his arms around her baby girl, hugging her tightly against her own slender form, while she choked out a soft sob.

Bryan soon followed after his wife, wrapping one long limb around both her and Belle, while lifting the other to cup and cradle the back of his daughter's silky head, his own eyes shimmering with tears of joy, love, and relief, which he soon sealed as well, as he held his two girls against himself, next turning his head to kiss the side of Belle's, before simply going back to enjoying the feeling of having his baby in his arms again, safe and healthy once more.

Belle couldn't help but stiffen slightly as Katherine first approached, and she stood still as her Mom cupped her face, before she found herself melting into first her arms, then her Dad's, her eyes slipping shut, while she raised her own hands to them, and the feeling of being held in her parents' loving embraces for the first time in eight months nearly caused her legs to buckle beneath her. Fortunately, Bryan was strong enough to effortlessly keep both his ladies on their feet, and she bit back a sob of relief, as she sagged into their safe, secure forms, and sheer comforting presences.

After loading up Bryan's blue Ford F-150 with Belle's luggage, the three climbed inside, pulled out of the airport, and onto Interstate 95,

which would take them all the way back to Derry from Portland.

The three hour long ride was quiet, with the only sounds being the wind blowing through the truck, since they had the windows open, and the low noise of the music Bryan had playing softly on the radio.

He drove, while Katherine rode shotgun, and Belle sat in the backseat. She was scrolling through on her phone, only her closest friends knew she was coming back today, but not Bill, who was currently at school for his last day before Summer, and she wanted to surprise him. Something else Belle had been able to do in England was finish up her Senior Year of High School and graduate from such, so she was still all set to head off to Harvard in a few months.

Looking up from responding to a text from Caroline, who, along with Emma, and another girl named Bonnie, were Belle's tight knit group of girls, she saw her parents exchange a smile, while Bryan reached over, and picked up Katherine's hand where it rested on the center console, the two entwining fingers, before her Father went back to watching the road, and Belle was unable to help but smile softly at the sight of her parents probably the happiest and most in love they've been in almost a year.

As soon as the blue Ford F-150 crossed over the town line into Derry, Belle choked, and began coughing, when a feeling, like a heavy, dense fog, enveloped her in a suffocating manner, but she was able to cover it up, when her concerned parents looked back at her, by joking a bug had flown into her mouth.

Her smile fading, as soon as Bryan and Katherine faced forward once more, her Father chiding that she was just like every other woman, and didn't know how to keep her mouth shut, a joke that earned him a scoff and a slap to the chest from her Mother, which he laughed off, as did she, Belle looked out the open window next to her, watching the town go by, with all of its familiar sights and people, and she'd almost gotten her heart to return to its normal pace, when the truck pulled into the driveway of their house.

Seeing the family's home for the first time in eight months, when the

last time she'd been in it was, without a doubt, during the worst time in her life, not to mention it was filled with both physical reminders of Georgie, and all of the memories of him, stole her breath from her lungs once more, though she managed to keep quiet about it this time, especially since her parents were distracted with other tasks.

Bryan killed the engine, and shared a look with Katherine, offering his wife a reassuring smile, before he climbed out, heading to begin unloading his daughter's luggage, while Kat climbed free next, moving to join Belle as she too climbed from the truck, her eyes never leaving the house.

"Does it look the same?" Katherine asked, lifting a hand to her daughter's slender back, and rubbing it through not only the material of her Henley, but her long chocolate curls that hung there.

"Yes," Belle nodded, almost jumping when her Mom touched her, she was that on edge that soon after returning to town.

"Well, we didn't change anything," Bryan said, as he gathered as many bags and other pieces of luggage, then sent his daughter a smile. "Unless you count the present your old parents have waiting for you in your bedroom."

"Mom, Dad, you shouldn't have," sighed Belle.

"Oh, come on," Katherine replied. "At least see it first. Then judge."

Belle smiled softly, nodding in agreement, before allowing her Mom to lead her up the front porch, and to the front door, which she paused to unlock, then open, before guiding her daughter inside.

"Oh, don't worry about the bags!" Bryan jokingly called after them. "I got it!"

Walking into the house, Belle once again felt suffocated. How did absolutely every single thing inside somehow make her think of Georgie?

She scanned the interior, which was brightly lit from all of the curtains being open, and the summer sun shining in, standing alone

in the foyer, while Katherine walked around, opening all of the windows, that they'd naturally closed and locked, before they'd left for Portland, and Bryan took a few trips from the truck to his daughter's room and back with her luggage, allowing the fresh air inside the house.

"You okay?" Bryan asked, as he came to a halt beside her, after shutting the front door, holding the last of her packed up belongings, aside from the carry on bag she had slung over her slender shoulder.

"Yes," Belle quickly replied, before flicking a look over at her Mom. "I believe someone said something about a present."

Katherine laughed softly, while Bryan chuckled, and he wrapped his free arm around his daughter's shoulders, guiding her to the stairs, while his wife followed behind them. "There's my girl."

Each step made her legs weaker, and she wasn't sure she'd be able to stand the sight of Georgie's bedroom once they got to the second floor, but, as if able to read her mind, Bryan held her tight against his side, while Katherine was not even a full step behind Belle, ready to catch her if her husband's hold for some reason failed.

Upon reaching the landing, Belle's eyes fell upon the dark doorway of her little brother's room, and it both angered and pained her to see it was the only place in the house not brightly lit up by sunshine, getting to enjoy the fresh air blowing in from outside through an open window.

"It's dark," Belle said. "Why is it dark?" She heard either one or both of her parents begin to speak, but she swiftly cut them off. "Why is it dark? You can't leave it dark! Don't you remember Georgie's afraid of the dark? You can't leave him in the dark!"

"Okay!" Bryan replied, loud enough so she'd hear him over her rant, but not so high it'd startle her, or make her think she was angry. "Okay, sweetie."

"It's all right," Katherine spoke, lifting a hand to her daughter's back. "It's all right, baby. I'll open the curtains and the window for him, okay?"

Belle merely nodded, her dark brown eyes were glistening with a burning sheer of tears, and she watched her Mother move over to her little brother's room, pausing at the dark entrance, before she disappeared inside, and, a second later, the room filled with sunshine, followed by the sound of the window being unlatched, then opened, causing her to hear birds chirping outside, mixed in with the light breeze, and she relaxed.

"I'm sorry," Belle said, raising a slender limb to touch one side of her own beautiful face. She had to remember her parents had lost a child. She had to remember Bill had lost his brother too. It wasn't just her loss, though she certainly felt it in the worst way. "I'm so sorry."

"Hey," Bryan responded, setting down the luggage he carried, then reaching out to draw her into his arms. "It's all right, my love. It's all right. We know."

Katherine emerged from her lost son's room, and strode quickly over to where her husband held their daughter, adding in her own hands, as well as comforting words. "It's okay, sweetheart. It's okay. We promise."

Taking in a deep, noticeably shuddered breath, Belle pulled back from Bryan, in order to wipe away the tears that had slipped free, then sent her parents a smile.

"Okay, present then, please," she joked, and her Mom and Dad smile in response, the latter nodding over at her room, which the former stepped into place to guide her to, while he gathered her luggage back up, and followed after them.

Stepping into her bedroom for the first time in eight months, Belle lifted her dark brown eyes to its interior. Her Dad had been truthful, nothing was different, it was all the same, aside from the new bedding on her bed, already made up, and the fact that was it was impeccably clean, plus it was naturally missing the stuff she'd taken with her, but, aside from that, it was the same.

"Your Mom picked out the new bedding," said Bryan, as he set the last of the luggage down in the pile he'd created just inside her

doorway. "We thought you'd want something new to sleep on."

"But that's not the present," Katherine spoke up, pointing at the end of her bed, while a bright smile lit up her beautiful face. "That is."

Belle saw it now. Settled in a perfect display were a bunch of new photography equipment, including cameras, lenses, tripods, storage, software, and, even a brand new laptop to view and edit them on. Photography had been a hobby of hers, before Georgie's death. Pretty much every framed or hung picture in the house had been taken by her, aside from the ones she was in, and, of course, the ones from before she was born.

"Oh, Mom, Dad," Belle breathed, as she padded over to her bed, setting her carry on bag on the floor, before she sat down by the equipment, picking up the nearest camera, and turning it over to look at it, then lowering her eyes to the rest of the gear. "You shouldn't have."

"Well, despite your many shopping trips while away," said Bryan, standing next to Katherine with one arm around her, and the other hand resting on his hip. "You still had a lot of money left in the account we set up for you, so we wanted to do something nice for you with it. Something that would make your homecoming less stressful, and more. . . happy."

"I *am* happy," Belle replied, sending her parents a smile. "Thank you so much."

"You're welcome, sweetie," Bryan answered, moving over to his daughter, and leaning down to press a kiss to the top of her head. "We also figured you'd want to document your last summer here in Derry."

"So, what do you want to do now?" asked Katherine, walking a few steps over to where her husband stood with their baby girl. "Do you want to play with your new toys? Or you can unpack. Oh! Are you hungry? I can make you something while you unpack. Or you can wait and we can eat and unpack together."

"Kat," Bryan spoke up to his excited wife. "Let Belle tell us what she

wants."

"Right," Katherine replied, blushing softly. "I'm sorry, sweetie. Your Dad's right. You tell us what you want to do."

"Um. . . " Belle began, setting the camera back down among the other equipment, then getting to her feet. "I want to go see Bill. If. . . that's okay."

"I think that's a great idea," Bryan said, nodding, before looking over at his wife. "School will be out soon."

"Yes," replied Katherine, smiling. "Of course, sweetie. Of course you want to see your brother. I know he'll be so happy to see you. We did as you asked, and didn't tell him you were coming home today, so, why don't you take your Dad's truck, and go pick him up from school? Give him the best surprise ever. Which is saying something, considering it's already his last day of the school year."

Belle smiled softly in response, nodding, before turning to her Dad, who dug the keys to his blue Ford F-150 out of his back jeans pocket, then handed them to her.

"Be careful," Bryan said, leaning in to press a kiss to her forehead, as she took the items.

"I will," replied Belle, before walking over to share a kiss on the cheek with her Mom.

"I'll unpack your stuff," Katherine said. "Then I'll get started on dinner. What would you like?"

"Mom, stop worrying about what *I* want," Belle laughed. "Make whatever you want, whatever we have."

"Oh, your Mom nearly bought out the entire grocery store when she went shopping yesterday while I was at work," Bryan chuckled. "I'm surprised it didn't tip Bill off. It's a good thing we have that extra fridge in the garage. She wanted to make sure you could have whatever you wanted for your first dinner back."

"Fine," Belle said. Truthfully, this was all overwhelming, but she was

determined to get through it. Or, at least, her first 24 hours back without a breakdown. Aside from the small one she'd just had about Georgie's room being dark. "Meatloaf, rice, mashed potatoes and gravy."

"You got it," Katherine responded. "What about dessert?"

"Why don't Bill and I pick up a cake or something on the way home?" Belle suggested, truthfully looking for any way to spend as much time away from the house as possible.

"Cake sounds perfect," said Bryan, smiling softly at his daughter.

"Okay," Belle grinned sweetly in response, before finally making her way from the room, waving to her parents with the hand holding the truck's keys. "We'll be back."

She heard them call out farewells to her, as she did her best to leave the house at a normal pace, but, as soon as she was out the front door, she absolutely bolted for the truck, all but throwing herself inside it, then starting it up, and backing as quickly as possible out of the driveway without drawing attention, before driving off toward the school, which had previously been her school, before she'd finished her Senior Year and graduated while in England.

"Best. Feeling. Ever," said Stan, as he, Bill, Eddie, and Richie emptied their backpacks into the two black trashcans on the sidewalk out of the school, then put the now weightless items back on.

"Yeah?" replied Richie, looking up at him. "Try tickling your pickle for the first time."

"Hey, what do you guys wanna do tomorrow?" asked Eddie, as they all ignored their friend's usual crued humor.

"I start my training," answered Richie, while he adjusted his already too large for him glasses.

"What- What training?" inquired Eddie, with a furrowed brow.

"Street Fighter," explained Richie, with a slight shrug.

"Is that how you wanna spend your summer?" Eddie asked in disbelief. "Inside of an **Arcade**?" Even though the business in question **had** just undergone a serious transformation, in order to get kids back inside it to play their games, rather than at home on X-Boxes, Playstations, and computers, and he knew the last place his friend wanted to be was at home with his parents, if you could call them that.

"Beats spending it inside with your Mother," Richie retorted, before offering up his hand to Stan for a high five. "Oh!"

"What if we go to the Quarry?" Stan offered, lifting his own limb, though not to return his friend's gesture, but to grab his wrist, and use it to lower the arm.

"Guys, we have the B-B-B-Barrens," Bill reminded them, standing with one hand holding his empty backpack.

"Right," Stan said, as Eddie and Richie nodded, while an air of sadness washed over the four.

"Betty Ripsom's Mom," Eddie spoke up next, drawing the boys' attention to the woman standing on the other side of road, staring intently at the school, which kids were still piling out of, excited to start their summer, while Sheriff Bowers and one of his Deputies stood behind her by their Squad Car.

"Is she really expecting to see her come out of that school?" asked Stan.

"I don't know," Eddie replied. "As if Betty Ripsom's been hiding at home after the last few weeks."

"You think they'll actually find her?" Stan inquired next, his gentle, loving heart shining through once more.

"Sure, in a ditch, all decomposed, covered in worms and maggots," Richie instantly began, lifting a hand to gesture at the shortest of the group, as he went on. "Smelling like Eddie's Mom's underwear."

"Shut up!" Eddie snapped back. "That's disgusting."

"She's not dead, she's m-m-m-missing," Bill said firmly to Richie.

"Sorry, Bill," Richie said genuinely, as he absently lifted a hand to touch his glasses, before looking over at Eddie once more. "She's missing."

Turning around, Bill started to walk off, and Eddie and Richie followed him, the latter, of course, already talking once more, while Stan paused to pick up something off of the ground that he'd dumped out of his backpack, but that had missed the garbage can, and toss it in, before he went to join his friends.

"You know, the Barrens aren't that bad," Richie spoke up. "Who doesn't love splashing around in shitty water?"

Before he, or any of the others, for that matter, could do or say anything else, Henry Bowers suddenly appeared, grabbing the back of Richie's backpack, then using it to harshly yank him backward, where he collided with Stan's front, causing both boys to collapse to the ground with grunts of surprise and pain, while the latter's yamaka flew off, and was quickly snatched up by Patrick Hockstetter, who fell into a crouch by its owner, holding it up tauntingly before he could recover.

"Nice frisbee, flamer," Patrick chuckled.

"Give it back!" Stan exclaimed, making a grab for it, but the older boy was too quick.

Laughing, Patrick straightened up, sharing a look with Henry, as well as Belch Huggins, who was sneaking up behind Eddie, before he tossed it *like* a frisbee into the open window of a passing by bus. "Fuck you, losers!"

Eddie nearly vomitted, when Belch did what he does best, and burped right into his ear, before shoving him in front of Bill, who was soon purposely knocked into by Henry, as he and Patrick walked by to join up with the third member of their group, and started toward where the fourth, Victor Criss, was waiting across the street for them by Belch's late 80s dark blue Pontiac Firebird Trans Am.

"You s-s-s-s-**suck**, Bowers!" Bill exclaimed, having a particularly hard time with the word 'suck', since any words with 's' or 'p' are the more difficult ones for him, and so the stutter of it came out more as one long syllable, rather than several individual 's's, but in his anger toward the lead bully, he managed to get it out, while Richie and Stan got to their feet behind he and Eddie at the garbage cans.

"Shut up, Bill!" Eddie pleadingly whispered to his friend, but it was too late, as the three older boys stopped, and turned to face the four, Patrick smirking widely.

"You. . . s-s-s-say something, B-B-Billy?" Henry mocked the one who stood up to him, before starting over toward him once more, shaking his head as he did so, and soon followed a few steps by Belch and Patrick. "You got a free ride this year 'cause of your siblings. Ride's over, Denbrough."

The sound of static on a radio suddenly pierced the air, and Henry looked over to see his Father, still with Betty Ripsom's Mom and his Deputy by the Squad Car, taking a step closer to the group, taking off his sunglasses, eyes glued on his son, whom he sent a warning look, knowing that's all he had to give him.

"This Summer's gonna be a hurt train," Henry continued, after meeting his Father's eyes, which, outwardly, only bothered him a bit, but, inside, shook him to his very core. "For you and your faggot friends."

Lifting one of his hands, he licked the entire length, from the bottom of the palm to the tips of his fingers, then went to wipe it on Bill's face, but, out of nowhere, another limb shot out, and grabbed it, preventing the action.

Belle stepped in between her brother and Henry, using her hold on the latter's wrist to twist the limb around behind his back, then lift a foot to kick the bully away, as she simultaneously released his arm.

Bill's heart skidded to a halt within his chest, as he suddenly found his beloved big sister, whom he hadn't seen in eight months, not only here, but saving him from Henry in a way he had no idea she knew how to do, while Eddie, Richie, and Stan's eyes widened at the

appearance of Belle.

Henry, meanwhile, stumbled on his feet, as she kicked him away, before angrily spinning around to see who'd done that, any plans he had to do or say something dying when he saw who it was, while the smirk that had alighted Patrick's face completely died, as he found himself looking at her sudden form in shock.

"Stay away from my brother and his friends, Henry," Belle said in a warning tone, while she planted her feet even more firmly on the ground in front of said boys.

"Well, well, well," Henry replied, a smirk of his own beginning to spread out across his visage, as he recovered from the blow, which still shocked him to learn had come from Belle, and started toward her. "Look who it is." Turning his head, he met Patrick's gaze with his own. "Better watch out, buddy. The ex is back in town."

"Why are you still hanging out with these Psychos?" Belle asked Patrick, finally looking past Henry at her ex-boyfriend.

"What do you care?" Patrick asked, recovering enough to smirk slightly, followed by a shrug of his lean shoulders. "**You** dumped **me**, remember?"

Belle sighed softly. She should've known Patrick would hate her. They'd dated for years, pretty much their entire teenage ones. They'd be each other's first everything. First date, first kiss, everything that came with being one another's first boyfriend and girlfriend. They'd even lost their virginities to one another. But then things changed.

Patrick started hanging out with Henry and the others, began bullying kids, even her own brother, and Belle knew she had to make a choice, which led to her breaking up with him, then, not long after, Georgie died, causing her to have to leave town to recover for eight months.

She still loved him though, she most defiantly continued to care about him. He was her first love, after all. They always hold a special, untouchable place in your heart, not to mention body, mind, and soul.

"Yeah," Henry said, turning to face her once more. "Then you left town for almost a year. My boy's moved on, sweetheart. Found some better pussy."

"Oh, baby," Belle mockingly said, while smiling in the same manner, even though it truly hurt her to think about Patrick with other girls. "There is no better than mine."

All four of the boys' eyes widened now, especially Bill. He'd never heard his sister talk like that. Even if she actually hadn't said the word as Henry had.

The lead bully chuckled softly, flicking a glance down Belle's beautiful, slender form, spotting the black lace of her bra visible through the open buttons of her Henley. "Such a tease." Taking a step closer, he went on. "You know there's only one way to find it. How about you give us a kiss?"

Belle mocked another smile, before leaning forward to whisper to him. "If you don't leave my brother and his friends alone, the only thing you'll be kissing is that pitiful thing between your legs goodbye."

Henry's smile faded, and he backed away on instinct, gazing at her for a moment, before he recovered, his eyes sweeping from Belle and the boys, to his Dad, who was still watching, now with a smirk on his face, and finally to his friends.

"Come on, Henry," Patrick spoke up, and, fortunately, the lead bully listened, though not before getting one last shot in on the group in front of him.

"I'll be seeing you all soon," he said, and Belle merely glared back at him, though her eyes soon drifted to Patrick, who met them with his, before he, Henry, and Belch finally walked over to join Victor, and climb into the car, which soon started off, swiftly driving off.

"Wish *he'd* go missing," Richie spoke up, words that caused Belle's brow to furrow, even as she watched Patrick until she could no longer see him.

"He's probably the one doing it," added on Eddie.

"Belle?" Bill said, before she could ask her brother's friends what they meant, after snapping out of gazing after her ex-boyfriend, and she looked down to see him gazing up at her, his eyes glistening with tears. "Is it really you?"

Belle smiled softly at him, fighting back her own sheen of years, as she came face to face with her brother for the first time in eight months, lifting her slender hands to cup either side of his growing more handsome by the day face, her touch seemingly confirming his last doubts that she wasn't real, since he choked out a joy filled sob at the feeling of her gentle limbs on his skin. "Yes, Bill. It's really me."

Breathing a bit heavily, Bill choked out another sob, then threw his arms around his sister, hugging her tightly, while he cried softly, and her own limbs instantly wound about his skinny body, holding him as snugly as she could against her own, soon lifting a hand to cradle the back of his head, while she dropped her own to press a kiss to its top, before burying her nose there.

"I've m-m-missed you s-s-so m-m-much!" Bill sobbed against her chest.

Belle laughed softly, not because it was funny, simply because she was so happy. Happier than she'd been in almost a year. Being back with Bill, it made up for all of the horrible feelings she'd had since first crossing over the town line a little over an hour ago. "I've missed you too, tough guy. More than you'll ever know."

It was now Bill's turn to laugh softly, as he pulled back to look up at her beautiful, beloved face. He'd almost forgotten how beautiful she was.

"I think I can im-imagine," he said, while she lifted her hands once more to wipe away his tears.

Smiling, Belle leaned down, and pressed a kiss to his forehead, before turning her sparkling dark brown gaze onto Eddie, Richie, and Stan, while Bill moved to stand beside her, where she still had one arm wrapped around his shoulders.

"Well, look at you three," she said, before quirking a dark brow playfully. "I don't remember saying you guys could get even more handsome while I was gone. How am I supposed to keep you all to myself when I'm now going to have to fight off every girl in school?"

Eddie, Richie, and Stan all blushed, looking away from Bill's beautiful sister, and Eddie and Stan were jealous Richie had his glasses to adorably fiddle with in the wake of her words.

"We've missed you too, Ellie," Stan said, being the first to recover, and offer her a smile.

"Yeah," added on Eddie.

"True that," spoke Richie, which caused the other three boys to roll their eyes.

Belle giggled sweetly, then stepped forward, and offered her arms to the trio. "Okay, come here, you three."

Richie got first dibs, wrapping his pale limbs around her waist, and she hugged him, while dropping a kiss to his forehead, before Stan moved in, and she pecked his cheek, then enveloped him in a hug similar to her one with Richie, before finally turning to Eddie, whom she offered her arms, laughing when he happily stepped into them.

She loved all of the boys, but Eddie held a special place in Belle's heart. Maybe it was because he reminded her the most of Georgie. And not just because he was the smallest in height. He was simply so sweet, gentle, and loving, so innocent, and naive of the World, just like Georgie, while Eddie only knew what his Mother allowed him to, making it up to his friends to keep him afloat in the real World.

But, since Eddie was the smallest, Belle got to pick him up. So, moving her arms beneath his, she did just that, lifting him right up off of his feet, and hugging him as he held onto her, laughing, while she pressed a long kiss to his cheek, before setting him down, where she saw his face was completely red.

Before she could do or say anything more, Bill had thrown his arms around her, and was embracing her tightly once again, as if making

sure she stayed there by keeping a physical hold on her, and she smiled softly, wrapping her own slender limbs about him once more.

"Okay, I'm guessing you boys have had enough of school," Belle said to the four.

"You got that right," scoffed Richie.

"Okay," Belle repeated with a nod. "So, why don't you lot get your bikes, we'll load them up in the truck, and I'll drive you all home?"

"Really?" Eddie said with a bright smile.

"Thanks, Belle!" Stan exclaimed, before Richie shoved he and Eddie forward.

"We'll get your bike, Bill," Richie said to their friend, so he could stay with his sister.

"Th-Th-Thanks, R-R-R-Richie!" Bill stuttered in response as fast as he could, before the three disappeared around the other side of the school to where they left their bikes in the morning.

Belle turned to face her brother, one arm still hanging loosely around his shoulders, while the other touched his face again.

"I can't believe you're really here," Bill said.

"Well, I am," Belle replied, before she sighed softly, moving forward, in order to fall into a crouch in front of him, where she took up both of his hands with her own, and now had to be the one to tilt her head to see him. "And I *promise*, Bill, I am *not* going anywhere ever again." Pausing, her beautiful face took on a playful expression. "At least not until summer's over, and I have to go to Boston. But, even then, I'll be home every weekend. I swear."

"You better," answered Bill, and she could tell he was barely holding back tears once more, but, before they could say anything more, someone else approached them.

"Thank you, Belle," came a somewhat gruff voice, and she looked up to see Sheriff Bowers standing there.

"Sheriff," Belle said respectfully, straightening up, where she turned to face the man, putting her arm around Bill once more. "What for?"

"For putting my son in his place," the man answered, nodding at the spot where Belch's car had once been. "Glad I'm no longer the only one who can do the job."

"Well, thank you, Sheriff," Belle replied. "But I was just protecting my brother and his friends."

"That may be, but, in any case, welcome home," Sheriff Bowers said, offering her a smile, as he lifted a hand to touch her slender shoulder, an action she wanted to slither away from like a snake under a rock, but she forced herself to stay still, even when he noticeably slid his gaze appreciatively up and down every inch of her beautiful form.

"Thank you, Sir," she merely responded with, as well as a smile of her own, before Henry's Dad turned, and headed back over to his Squad Car, which was when she noticed the woman by it with the Deputy. "Is this Betty Ripsom's Mom? Is she picking her up from school?"

"N-N-No," Bill reluctantly replied, now realizing he's most likely going to have to tell her about how the girl's gone missing.

As soon as she'd said it, Belle could tell by the look on the woman's face that she wasn't here to pick her daughter up from school, and Eddie and Richie's earlier words flooded back into her mind.

"Is this what Eddie and Richie were talking about?" she asked her brother, whom she turned to face once more. "Did Betty Ripsom go missing?"

"Y-Y-Yes," Bill answered, just as reluctantly as before.

"How long has she been missing?" Belle inquired next, even as a pit of despair began to rise up in her stomach.

"A f-f-few we-weeks," responded Bill, continuing when he saw the look of sadness that came across his sister's beautiful face. "E-Ellie, please d-d-don't be upset! We ju-ju-just got you b-b-back!"

Belle was about to respond with how she'd gotten upset as soon as

she'd pulled up in their Dad's truck and saw Henry, Patrick, and Belch tormenting Bill and his friends, especially Patrick. She'd really hoped he'd have moved past this bullying bullshit by now, but she didn't want her brother to be upset either, so she sent him the strongest reassuring smile she could.

"It's okay, Bill," said Belle, reaching out to hug him. "I'm not upset. It's okay. I'm fine. I promise."

Bill sighed in relief, embracing his sister in return, and, a few minutes later, Eddie, Richie, and Stan returned with their bikes, as well as her brother's.

"All right," Belle spoke, wrapping an arm around Bill's shoulders, as he took his bike from Richie, and Stan's, while the five started across the street to the truck. "Nobody's moved, right? Everybody still lives where they used to?"

"Well, actually, could you drop me at the synagogue?" asked Stan. "My bar mitzvah's coming up, and I have a lesson with my Dad."

"Your bar mitzvah's coming up?" Belle replied excitedly, offering the young boy a bright smile, while she hugged him slightly up against her side. "That's *great*, Stanley! I'm *so* proud of you!"

"Have you s-s-seen anyone else yet?" Bill asked, as he sat buckled in the passenger seat of Bryan's blue Ford F-150 truck, while Belle drove. They'd dropped Eddie and Richie off at their houses, and Stan at the Synagogue, then went to pick up a cake for dessert, and were now on their way home.

"No," Belle replied, while she guided the vehicle with one slender hand on the steering wheel, and rested the side of her long lush silky curly head on the other, since her elbow was on the open window frame, as they had the windows on the truck down, soon looking over at her brother to offer him a soft smile. "The girls are coming over for a little bit after dinner though."

"I'm s-s-sorry about P-P-Patrick," said Bill, causing his sister to shift her gaze over onto him once more, having moved it back onto the

road after falling silent.

"Oh, Billy," Belle sighed, moving the hand she'd been resting her head on to the steering wheel, in order to take the one that'd been on it off, so that she could reach over, and grasp her younger sibling's nearest hand. "You don't ever have to apologize for him. It's not your fault."

"I t-t-t-tried to t-t-talk to him," Bill stuttered out. "W-When he wasn't with B-Bowers."

Belle looked over at him once more, surprised at his words, before she offered him a fresh soft smile, while she began to rub the back of his hand with her thumb. "Thanks, love. I appreciate that." Sighing, she went on. "I thought about him a lot, when I was in England. I hoped he'd have gotten over this bullying thing. That the guy I'd fallen in love with would break through whatever hold Henry has on him, but I guess I was foolish to think that would happen."

"It's never f-f-foolish to think the people we love could come b-back to us," said Bill, a statement that caused Belle's brow to furrow, as she once more flicked a glance at him. She knew he wasn't really talking about Patrick.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I want to show you something," Bill answered with a smile. "Wh-When we get home. B-Before we go i-inside. It's in the g-g-garage."

"Okay," Belle slowly responded, trying to ignore the rising feeling of anxiety that his words caused her, before she focused on driving again, and the two fell silent, holding hands, as she guided the truck through the town to their house.

Pulling into the driveway, behind their Mom's car, Belle turned off the engine, then climbed from the truck, fetching Bill's empty backpack from the second row of seats, while her brother got the boxed up cake, setting it on the hood, then leading his sister to the closed garage, his bike, affectionately called 'Silver', still in the bed of the vehicle.

"Come on," Bill called to Belle, who set his empty backpack next to the cake on the front of the vehicle, then followed him.

She had a bad feeling about whatever it was inside the garage, which, like most people, they never used for actually storing vehicles, though Bryan's truck was too big for it anyway, so only Katherine's car would've fit, that Bill wanted to show her, but she couldn't say, 'No.' to him, especially since she just reunited with him after almost a year.

Belle stood back as Bill lifted up the garage door, then followed him inside, flicking a glance around at everything kept in the outside room attached to the house, including all of Bryan's familiar workout gear, before her gaze fell upon a table with a bunch of yellow, see through tubes put together on it, and, nearby, the cage with her brother's pet hamster in it.

"Hey, what'd you do with Mr. Gordo's tunnels?" Belle asked, as she now recognized the items, just before spotting something hanging on the wall to the left that made her heart skip a beat.

It was a map of Derry, showing the streets, and, beneath them, the sewer lines. It was from their Dad's office, since he needed it for his in town construction contracts.

"Come look," Bill said, snapping Belle out of her thoughts, and she walked over to the table, where she watched him drop an action figure into the open tunnel bit sticking up into the air, that was labeled with tape and permanent marker "Witcham", the name of the street Georgie had died on, then grab the gardening hose she now realized had been dragged into the garage from its usual resting place outside of it.

Bill pulled the handle, causing water to emit from the spout, which fueled the action figure through the makeshift sewer system he'd built, and Belle followed it with her eyes, until it fell out of one of the tubes facing down at the ground, and into a used paint tray on the floor, that had been labeled "The Barrens", rather than the one next to it, which had no assigned name.

"See?" Bill smiled, setting the hose down, as he lifted a bright smile to

his sister's beautiful face. "The Barrens! If the storm swept Georgie in, it's the only place that he could've ended up."

Belle's heart, which she hadn't thought could break any further than it already had been, absolutely shattered at her brother's words, and the realization that he'd built this sewer model out of his hamster's tunnels as a show that their little brother could still be alive and out there.

She'd never told Bill what she'd seen that day, and she'd promised herself she never would. It wasn't because she didn't think he'd believe her, she simply didn't want her little brother, the only one she had left now, with those images in his head. She'd take them to her grave before she imposed the horrific death of Georgie on Bill. She'd also never told her parents the whole truth. She knew *they* wouldn't believe her. Why would they? She barely did, and she'd actually been there. She just confirmed what they already knew, that Georgie was gone, and he was never coming back.

The story of what had happened to Georgie had been easy to put together for the Cops, even without a statement from Belle. By the time they'd gotten there, all of Georgie's blood had been washed away by the rain, but Mrs. Sterling telling the Police she'd seen it, as well as, moments prior, the little boy himself by the sewer drain, made them come to the conclusion that he'd fallen, hurt himself, most likely a head injury, causing him to be knocked unconscious, bled out, and the storm had swept his body into the sewers, while Belle had arrived during the events, though not in time to save him, hence her breakdown.

"Oh, baby," Belle breathed, while a burning sheen of tears rose up in her dark brown eyes, as she moved closer to Bill, and fell into a crouch in front of him, where she grasped his hands with her. She truly didn't know what to do, what to say. She couldn't tell him Georgie was dead, especially because that would mean he'd demand answers as to why she was so sure, and she'd have to break her promise to never tell him what she saw, but she couldn't bring herself to dash his hopes that he could find their little brother either. All she could do was pray Georgie's body was found, so they could bury him, and finally, truly get passed this. "You did a great job."

Bill's smiled faltered at the sight of his sister's reaction to his display, but returned when she complimented his work.

"I know we'll find him someday," Belle went on, and she wasn't lying. She just left out the part of how she was speaking of his body, not him alive, as Bill hoped. "And I know it means so much to him that his big brother is working so hard to bring him home." Again, not a lie. They were a Church going family, or at least, had been, and believed in God, Heaven, Hell, etc., so she knew Georgie was watching them from Heaven, and that, once they found and laid his remains to rest, he'd be home again. "But I don't want Mom or Dad getting upset. So, why don't we give Mr. Gordo back his tunnels? And put the map back in Dad's office, before he sees it's missing?"

Bill nodded. He'd spent a lot of time on the model of the sewers, and he'd planned to show it to his parents, but, when he was reunited with Belle today, he knew she had to be the first one to see it. Now that she had, and knowing she believed him, was enough for him.

"I'll take a video of it with my phone before we do so," Belle added on, offering her brother a smile. "Just in case we need it later."

"Thanks, Belle," Bill said, and she could tell he too was now holding back tears. "I just needed someone to believe me, you know."

"I know, love," Belle replied, stroking his hands with her slender thumbs, before she used the hold to pull him to her, kissing his cheek, before wrapping her arms around him, and hugging him tightly, an action he happily returned, securing his limbs about her neck and endless chocolate tresses, and she couldn't help but flick a glance at the sewer model made from the hamster tunnels, as she embraced him, before she forced her gaze away, closing her eyes in order to help do so.

Belle held the front door open, so that Bill could carry the cake inside, then closed and locked it behind him, his empty backpack once more slung over her slender shoulder, while they'd unloaded his bike from the truck before coming inside.

"We're home!" Belle called to their parents, as she wrapped an arm

around Bill's shoulders, then led him through the house to the kitchen, where they found Kat, cooking dinner. "Hey, Mom."

"Hey!" Katherine exclaimed, pausing in her task of using the mixer to mash the freshly peeled and cut up potatoes, in order to walk over them. "There are my babies." She kissed Belle on the cheek, and Bill on the top of his head, before taking the boxed cake from him. "I'll take that, sweetheart."

"Where's Dad?" Belle asked, as she handed her brother his empty backpack.

"He's in the shower," replied Katherine. "You got a package in the mail, Belle. From your Uncle Rupert." She laughed softly, as she placed the cake on the counter. "Your Dad joked it was must be the one thing you couldn't fit in your luggage."

Belle smiled softly at her Mom's words, even as the realization of the package arriving hit, since she knew exactly what was in it, as Uncle Rupert was the family friend she'd spent eight months in England with.

"Yes, pretty much," Belle laughed, before gesturing behind her, in the direction of the staircase. "Uh, I should go open that."

"Okay," Katherine said, turning her sparkling eyes onto her son. "Come on, Bill. Be my kitchen helper and set the table?"

"Uh, s-s-sure, Mom," Bill stuttered in surprise, meeting his sister's gaze, before he moved to do so, and she smiled at him.

Belle knew this was probably the happiest her brother had seen their Mom since that day in October, and it naturally threw him, but pleasantly, so she gave him a reassuring look that it was real, then watched as he excitedly went to complete a task that, eight months ago, he'd have complained about having to do, while tossing his empty backpack aside for the time being.

Turning on her heel, her endless lush dark brown curls spinning through the air, Belle swiftly made her way back to the foyer, then upstairs.

Belle could hear her Father in the shower, and she smiled softly at the sound, before stepping into her room, where she closed the door behind her.

Facing the interior, she saw her Mom had indeed unpacked everything, and her bedroom was now truly immaculate. Even her new camera equipment was set up on her desk.

But all she was interested in was the rather large rectangular plain brown paper wrapped package on her bed, secured all around with thick clear tape.

Grabbing a pair of scissors from her dresser, Belle walked over, and sat down beside the package, checking the address to make sure it was indeed from the man in England, before she began at it with the sharp item, soon having the tape sliced through, and the paper ripped away, exposing the box it'd all been concealing.

Setting it down on her bed, she shifted in her position to better face it, bringing one leg up in front of her, bent at the knee, then reached out to open it.

Inside, held perfectly in place by fitted black foam, cut specifically for the item and its accessory, was a Desert Eagle with a brushed chrome finish, a .50 caliber handgun that weighed almost 5 pounds even without a clip, an item which was currently tucked into another cut slot of the black foam next to the weapon, in it.

Belle picked the gun up, and held it in one hand, turning it over to look at it from all angles, before she plucked the clip free, seeing it wasn't loaded.

Placing it on the bed, she rested the heavy weapon in her lap, then reached into the package, pulling up the piece of black foam, which was when she saw what she'd been looking for, a box of ammunition hidden on the bottom.

Picking up the box, Belle opened the top, and her eyes fell upon its contents, which were rows of bullets made entirely out of silver.

She plucked one of the rounds free, holding it up in front of herself,

and turning her fingers slightly, so she could view it by way of the sunlight hitting it from her open window, making sure it was what she'd asked her Uncle to make for her, and it was.

Placing the bullet in the box once more, she closed it, and tucked it back into the package, before she grabbed the empty clip, then swiftly loaded it up into the grip, before effortlessly pulling back the heavy barrel, which cocked the gun. Were there an actual round in the chamber now, and were the safety off, it'd be ready to fire.

Taking in a deep breath, Belle released slowly released it, as she looked at the powerful gun in her hands. She hadn't exactly spent all of her time in England doing her school work, and focusing on her both mental and physical health. She'd gotten most of that done in the first few months. The rest of the time she'd spent getting ready, under her Uncle's tutelage, specifically training in hand to hand combat, and learning about firearms, with the Desert Eagle being her favorite, and, since civilians, of course, can't carry weapons on planes, the gun had to be sent to her through the mail, something only Law Enforcement and Military could do, so it was perfect that her Uncle was the latter.

She may have no idea exactly what it was that killed her brother that stormy day back in October, whether it was Human or not; though most likely the latter, a fact she'd had to come to terms with, hence the silver bullets, as she figured, since the material was often a weapon used against monsters in fictional stories, it was probably her best bet against the thing that had taken Georgie from her and her family; but she **did** know **one** thing for sure, and that was that she was going to kill that fucking clown.

- Author's Note - Well, there you have it. Chapter Two. And, just to confirm, as I said I would, Patrick Hockstetter **is** Belle's "love interest" or whatever you want to call it in this story, which should let you know that his fate will probably be quite different from the movie. ;)

Again, with that, I really hope you guys enjoyed it, and PLEASE take the time to send in a review! I'll most likely start work on Chapter Three this weekend, if not today, so, the more you review, the more motivated I am, and, therefor, the faster the story would be updated.

:)

3. First Night

- Author's Note - Wow! I don't even know what to say. I thought the feedback for Chapter One had been amazing, but you all absolutely crushed it for Chapter Two! So many favorites, follows, and, best of all, reviews!

Thank you SO, SO, SO much to **Nightingale690**, **Ahlysab**, **chelsnichole12**, **zoe danvers**, **Winchestergirl123**, **Nirvana14**, **HermioneandMarcus**, **XxCrimsonSnowxX**, **.5**, **SpellSlaughterWithoutLaughter**, **julianagf.g90**, **kalk7897**, **spiritgirl16**, and **Guest** for reviewing!

I'm going to do my best to start responding to each of you, either in PMs, or at the start of the next Chapters, so I can do so for those who send in reviews as Guests, but, for now, please know that each and every review means SO much to me!

I'm SO glad you all love Belle, her relationship with Bill, and the rest of the Losers Club, Patrick being her "love interest", the story, my style of writing, and everything else you guys complimented me on. Thank you SO, SO much!

With that, here's Chapter Three. I hope you guys enjoy it as much as you did the previous two, and, as always, PLEASE review!

Belle hid the box containing the gun, clip, and silver bullets away on one of the top shelves in her walk-in closet, a task which required her to physically climb on some of the lower ones, as she wasn't very tall, at least not enough to reach the furthest one from the floor without assistance, and, fortunately, she also didn't weigh much, then left her bedroom to head back downstairs.

She was so lost in her thoughts that she didn't hear her Father coming down the hallway at the same time she stepped out into it, and nearly jumped from her skin, when she ran straight into him.

"Whoa!" Bryan exclaimed, his large hands instinctively reaching out to steady his daughter, as she gasped in horror and surprise, at

suddenly colliding with his tall, sturdy form. "Easy there, kid." He chuckled softly. "It's just your old man."

"Sorry," Belle breathed, as she sagged in relief at the confirmation that it **was** just her Father, whom she offered a soft smile, while she attempted to calm the fast beating of her heart. "Sorry, Daddy. I'm just a little on edge, being home after so long."

"I know, sweetheart," Bryan replied, sighing sadly, and dropping one hand from her, while the other lifted to affectionately touch a side of her beautiful face. "It's going to take some time. Your Mom, your brother, and I understand that."

Belle sent her Father a second gentle grin, this one of gratitude, but, before either of them could do or say more, Bill's voice called up the staircase to them from the foyer.

"Belle! Dad!" he said. "D-D-Dinner!"

"Shall we?" Bryan asked his daughter, offering her his arm, after flicking his glance to the top of the steps at the sound of his son's voice.

Belle laughed softly at her Father's actions, but looped her own slender limb through his extended one, then placed her other hand on his forearm, which he soon covered with his own second limb, before leading her to, then down, the staircase.

After dinner, Katherine cut four pieces from the cake her children had brought home, then passed them out at the table, before covering the dessert back up.

"Well, there's plenty left for the girls when they get here," she said. "Are they going to sleep over?"

"No," Belle replied. "I told them I wanted to spend my first night back just with you three." She offered her parents and Bill a soft smile. "There'll be plenty of time for slumber parties this Summer."

"Now, listen," Bryan spoke up, pointing a finger at his son and daughter, which caused them to share a knowing glance, as well as a

smirk. "I don't want you two staying up all hours of the night. Just because it's Summer doesn't mean you two don't still need your sleep."

"Don't worry, Dad," Belle spoke in a joking manner. "We'll be asleep before the sun sets, and up, feeding the chickens, before it rises."

"Now, don't you take that tone with me, young lady," Bryan replied, as his wife and son laughed, even though he was barely holding back chuckles of his own, which he soon set free, while he reached under the table to playfully slap his daughter's leg.

"Mom, may I have a g-g-glass of m-milk?" Bill asked Katherine, looking over at where she stood by the fridge.

"Of course, sweetie," Katherine replied, offering her son, now the only one she had, a soft smile, before she moved to fetch the drink.

"So, how **was** your last day of school, Bill?" Bryan inquired of his boy, whom he couldn't believe was now 13 years old, while Belle would be 18 before the Summer was over.

"G-G-Good," answered Bill, before shrugging. "Not much happens on the l-l-last d-day."

"Well, maybe nowadays, that's the case," Bryan said. "But, when your Mother and I were going to school, our teachers **happily** gave us Summer homework."

"You mean, back when the Dinosaurs roamed the Earth?" Belle asked, sending Bill a wink, before the family erupted in laughter once more.

"Boy, somebody came back from England a little firecracker," replied Bryan, as he gazed at his daughter with sparkling blue-green eyes.

"Besides, I take offense to that," spoke Katherine, as she set a glass of ice cold milk in front of her son, then sat back down at her seat at the table. "Your Dad's 20 years older than me. At the very least, **I** was dodging **polar bears** on **my** way to school."

The family all laughed once more, before a rather contented silence

fell on the four, while they enjoyed their cake, the silence only broken when Bill decided he wasn't close enough to his big sister, and therefor got up to move his chair right next to hers, before transferring his drink and dessert over, then taking up his seat once more, a sight that caused Belle and both parents to smile softly, and share looks, while the former happily wrapped a slender arm around her brother's shoulders, leaning over to press a kiss to his forehead.

"So, am I correct in guessing you, Eddie, Richie, and Stanley will be attached at the hip once more this Summer?" Bryan asked Bill, after a few moments, while he used his fork to slice a bit off of his piece of cake. "What do they call that, Kat? Brothers from another Mother?"

"Oh, my God," Belle breathed at her Father's words, rolling her eyes playfully, before she smiled down at her brother. "Well, they were attached at the hip when I saw them today." Looking back up at her parents, she went on. "Did you know Stan's going for his bar mitzvah this Summer?"

"Yeah," Bryan nodded, as he chewed his bite of dessert. "His Dad's already invited all of us to the ceremony." Smiling softly, he went on. "He's really proud."

"Did you see anyone else while you were at the school, Ellie?" asked Katherine, and Belle looked up from her cake to her Mother.

"Yes, Mom, I saw Patrick," replied Belle, since she knew that's who she was trying to subtly ask about.

Katherine nodded, then spoke up once more. "His Mom and I still have coffee every week. She's been really worried about him this past year."

Belle sighed softly at her Mother's words. "Well, I don't have a magic wand I can wave to make him better."

"I'm not saying you do, sweetie," answered Katherine. "Just that you were a really good influence on him. Maybe you could talk to him."

"I don't think so," Belle replied, as she began absently picking at her cake. "He hates me."

"He doesn't hate you, Ellie," Bryan spoke up in what he hoped was a reassuring manner.

"Well, he's still walking under Henry's shadow," sighed Belle. "I wasn't strong enough to pull him out before. I'm defiantly not strong enough to do so now."

Bill, Bryan, and Katherine all shared a sad look, before returning their attention to their dessert, Bill shifting even closer to his sister, causing her to respond by dropping a kiss to the top of his head, while she used her arm around his shoulders to hug him further against her side, and the sight of the children caused Bryan and Katherine to exchange a smile.

A little while later, after dinner had been cleaned up, the family all sat together on the sofa, watching TV. Bryan had an arm around Katherine's shoulders, while Bill was resting his head on Belle's shoulder, and she, in turn, had her head leaning against his.

The four's comfortable silence, which was only broken by the basketball game they were currently watching, was pierced however, by the sound of the doorbell from the front door, causing all to lift their heads, and look in the foyer's direction.

"That's probably the girls," Belle said, offering her family a smile, before she patted Bill on the leg, then got to her feet, and went to answer it, while Bryan threw his free arm around his son, using the hold to playfully embrace him against his side.

"Ow, Dad!" Bill exclaimed playfully, lifting his hands to try and pry off his Father's strong limb, even as he laughed. "I can't b-b-b-breathe!"

Belle smiled softly at the sounds of her family behind her in the living room, before she came to a halt in front of the door, undid the locks, and opened it, where she nearly had a heart attack.

All she could see was balloons. Ones of all different colors, shapes, and sizes, attached to curly white ribbons, and her heart began pounding fast against the inside of her chest, before the sea of

balloons parted, and her three best friends, Bonnie, Caroline, and Emma were revealed, standing there holding presents and containers of food.

"Surprise!" all three exclaimed, before moving inside the foyer, as Belle backed up, and tried to calm down her breathing, which had also picked up.

"Aw! Did we scare you?" Caroline, who had a hold of one of the two groups of balloons, while Bonnie had the other, set her bag down, upon seeing the recovering look on their friend's face. "I'm sorry, sweetie!"

Reaching out, Caroline, who was a beautiful blond like Emma, wrapped her free arm around Belle.

"It's okay," Belle breathed in relief, as she hugged her friend in return. "I just didn't know you guys were gonna make a big deal out of this."

"Out of seeing our best friend for the first time in eight months?" Bonnie, a gorgeous African American with stunning emerald green eyes, asked, quirked a dark brow at Belle, when she and Caroline parted. "Come on, now. We've known each other since pre-school."

"We've got balloons, presents, and, best of all, food!" Emma cheerfully exclaimed, holding up her container, which looked to have brownies in it.

"Great," Belle said. "We'll all be in a sugar coma, 'cause there's cake in the kitchen from our dinner." Sighing softly, she went on. "Besides, *I'm* the one who went away. *I'm* the one who's supposed to have gotten you all gifts."

Caroline gasped, as she straightened up from fetching her bag off of the floor. "*Did* you?"

"Of course I did," Belle replied, rolling her rich chocolate brown eyes. "Like Bonnie said, we've known each other since pre-school."

The other three girls exchanged glances and laughed, before the trio moved forward at once, and all four girls hugged, Belle unable to help smiling softly, as she embraced her three best friends for the first

time in almost a year.

After putting the food away in the kitchen for later, the four girls headed up to Belle's room with the balloons and presents.

"Wow!" Bonnie exclaimed, as she walked over to her friend's desk, and saw all of the new camera equipment on it.

"'Welcome Home' present from Mom and Dad," Belle replied, while she closed the door to her bedroom, then opened the one to her walk-in closer, in order to fetch the gifts she had for her friends.

"So!" Caroline said, plopping down onto Belle's bed, and smiling brightly. "What'd you get us?"

"Wow, Caroline," Emma answered, rolling her eyes at their friend's words. "Priorities."

Belle giggled sweetly, as she emerged from her closet with the rather large shopping bag that had the presents in it. "It's nice to know she didn't change while I was gone."

"She sure didn't," Bonnie scoffed. "Still all boys, clothes, and, while she's at it, more boys."

Belle faltered in her steps at this, as Henry's earlier words about Patrick filled her minds. All four of the girls, as previously stated, had known each other since pre-school, and, while Caroline had always been the more stereotypical "cheerleader/popular girl", she had to believe one of her best friends wouldn't go after her own ex-boyfriend while she was gone recovering from her little brother's death.

"And presents!" Caroline pointed out, before extending her slender arms to Belle, and wiggling her fingers excitedly. "Gimme, gimme!"

Shaking herself from her thoughts, Belle laughed softly, and continued on to the bed, where Bonnie and Emma joined them, handing Caroline the bag, before settling in against her pillows, while she watched with a sweet smile as they opened their gifts.

"Oh, my gosh," breathed Caroline, when she unwrapped her new

scarf, which she immediately slung around her neck, then begin putting further into place. "This is so pretty, Ellie!"

"Gorgeous!" exclaimed Bonnie, as she held up her dangling heavy rhinestone necklace. "It'll go with everything."

"I love it, sweetie!" said Emma, who'd gotten a new dress made out of beautiful patterned, soft, flowy material, perfect for summer.

Belle smiled brightly at her friend's reactions to the gifts she'd got them while in England, and happily accepted each of their hugs and kisses, as well as words of gratitude.

"Okay, now you have to open ours!" Emma spoke, gesturing at where they'd left their presents with the two groups of balloons.

"Is it all right if I do that later?" Belle inquired. "I think I've just had enough excitement for one day. Especially my first day."

"Of course, Ellie," said Caroline, rubbing her friend's leg.

"Yeah, we can do whatever **you** want to do," added on Bonnie.

"Just tell us, and it's done," pointed out Emma, and Belle sent them all smiles of thanks.

"Let's just do what we used to do," she answered. "Be together, as friends."

"As sisters," Bonnie said, causing Belle to laugh softly, even while Caroline and Emma nodded.

"Sisters," Caroline agreed, with a nod of her curly blond head.

"Always," Emma spoke, before all three girls cuddled up on either side of Belle, and the four hugged one another.

"This equipment is **amazing**, Belle!" said Bonnie a short while later, as she further examined her friend's new camera stuff. "This is, like, professional photographer level stuff."

"Yeah," Caroline agreed, joining Bonnie at Belle's desk, while Emma sat on the bed with its owner, looking through photos she'd taken on the camera she'd taken with her to England. "You sure you still want to be a Doctor? You could be the next Annie Leibovitz."

"Nowadays, **anyone** can take "professional" photos just using their phones," Belle pointed out. "But becoming a Doctor takes actual work."

"She has a point," Bonnie agreed, handing the camera off to Caroline, before turning to face Belle and Emma, offering the former a smile. "Yours are still the best though."

"Thanks, Bon," Belle replied, smiling sweetly in return.

"Absolutely," Caroline spoke, flicking a glance over at the beautiful brunette. "So, we get to be your models again this Summer, right? Do lots of photoshoots?"

"If that's how you guys wanna spend your last Summer in Derry," scoffed Belle. "Being told how to pose by me."

"Well, we want to spend it with **you**," Emma pointed out, wrapping an arm around her friend's slender shoulders. "We haven't seen you in eight months."

Belle smiled softly at the three once more, before moving her gaze over onto Bonnie. "Hey, how's your Grams doing? What about your cousin? Is he still living on the farm outside of town with your Grandpa?"

"Mike?" Bonnie asked, quirkling her dark brow, as she walked across the room to join Belle and Emma on the bed, which she laid over on her stomach, causing her two friends to move back against the pillows once more to better see her. "Yeah, he's still on the farm." Sighing softly, she went on. "He called Grams this morning to complain about Mike still not being able to execute the sheep."

Bonnie's Grandparents had divorced many years ago, when their two children, Bonnie's Mom and Mike's Dad, has still been young. Leroy had stayed on the farm, while Sheila had moved into town, and their

two children had spent their time between the two homes, before moving onto lives of their own.

Bonnie's Mom, Abbie, had left Derry when Bonnie was a baby, leaving her to be raised by her Father, Rudy, whom Grams said was more her child than her own daughter, that had abandoned her young child, while Mike's parents, Will and Jessica, had died in a house fire not long ago, causing Mike to have to live with his Grandfather, while Bonnie lived with Grams in town, as her Dad was always away on business.

"Well, who can blame him for having trouble with that?" Emma asked, while Caroline set the camera down on the desk, then skipped over, and jumped onto the bed with her three friends, laying on her side, where she propped her blond head up on one hand.

Caroline lived with her Mother, Liz, who was one of the town's Police Officers, while her Father, Steven, hadn't been in the picture since she was a child, having left them when he discovered he was gay. Emma's home situation was similar to her and Belle's two friends. She resided with her Father, Charlie, another Derry Cop, and her Mother, Juliet, had died in a car accident when Emma was eight.

Belle was the only one with both parents, and the only one with both parents still together. She was also the only one with siblings, or, more correctly now, sibling, as Bonnie, Caroline, and Emma were all only children, though Bonnie loved Mike like a little brother, even though he was technically her cousin, and she wished he could come live with her and Grams, especially since he's having such a hard time adjusting to life on the farm.

"My Grandfather, apparently," Bonnie replied, with a roll of her deep brown eyes.

"What about Alec?" asked Belle next, looking over at Emma. "How's the boyfriend doing?"

Emma couldn't help but beam in happiness and love at her best friend's mention of her boyfriend, Alec. He was a few years older than her, and, therefor, no longer lived in Derry, attending College at the University of Maine a few hours away in Orono, but he always

came back to Derry to spend his Summers.

"He's good," Emma replied. "He should be home this weekend." She placed a hand on Belle's nearest leg, and gave it a squeeze. "I know he'll be glad to see you."

"So, what you about you, Miss England?" Caroline asked, giving the leg of Belle's closest to her a playful nudge, while a smirk tugged at the corners of her lips. "How many cute British boys did you bag while you were over there?"

"Uh, none," answered Belle, before shrugging her slender shoulders. "I wasn't on vacation, you know, Care."

"There's always time for boys, Ellie," Caroline responded, wagging her eyebrows playfully at her.

"Maybe for you," Bonnie retorted. "We can't all be sluts."

"Hey!" Caroline scoffed, reaching out to gently hit her friend on the arm. "I am not a slut. I am just. . . happy to provide company for any lonely, good looking boy our age."

Belle rolled her rich chocolate hued eyes, even as her earlier thoughts about Caroline possibly having provided company for Patrick while she was gone returned to her head.

"And for your information, I've only had *three* boyfriends the entire Senior Year!" Caroline pointed out.

It was Bonnie's turn to roll her dark brown eyes, before she shifted them back onto Belle. "So, no cute English boys, huh?"

"Nope," Belle repeated. Not that she hadn't seen plenty of them, and even hung out with some when she'd go into town to shop and such. "Not that I wasn't asked."

"Of *course* you were asked," Emma said. "This *beautiful* girl from America with the exotic Austrian accent and Vietnamese background? I'll bet they were following you around like puppies."

Belle laughed softly. She *did* have a soft Australian accent, mainly

because she and her parents had moved to Australia for a brief time during the period she just happened to be learning how to speak. Bryan and Katherine were convinced to return for one more Military mission before truly retiring in Derry, and so their daughter had picked up the accent, then never really lost it.

"So, does that mean you're still hung up on You-Know-Who?" asked Caroline.

"You-Know-Who?" Emma responded, her blond brow furrowing. "When did we enter the magical World of Harry Potter, Care?"

"Sorry," Caroline answered. "I don't know if we're allowed to say his name or not."

"Patrick," Belle spoke for all of them.

"Yeah," Caroline sighed, rolling her blue eyes. "Him."

"Caroline, shut up," Bonnie scolded her blond friend.

"I'm sorry, I just never knew what Belle saw in him," spoke Caroline, shrugging with her hands, before she returned to resting her golden head on one.

"Just because he's not Captain of the Football Team doesn't mean he's unappealing," responded Bonnie.

"No, he's just a jerk who broke our best friend's heart by hanging out with that Bowers Psycho and the rest of his Merry Luanatics, then began picking on her own brother and his friends," sighed Caroline.

"Care," Emma spoke in a warning tone, worried about what all of this negative talk would do to Belle.

"It's okay, Em," Belle replied, as if reading her best friend's mind, offering her a soft smile as well. "Caroline's right." Sighing, she went on. "After Mom, Dad, and I got home from the airport, I took Dad's truck to pick Bill up from school, and, when I pulled in, the first thing I saw was Patrick, Henry, and Belch tormenting my brother and his friends. Patrick even took Stan Uris' yamaka, and tossed it into a bus that was passing by."

"So, why do you still care about him so much?" asked Caroline, turning onto her stomach as well, so that she could better see Belle and Emma, in addition to Bonnie, whom she was laying next to.

"Because I just do!" Belle sighed in frustration. "Okay? I'm sorry, but I can't turn off my feelings. I spent eight months trying to learn how to do that, and I can't. I *hate* what he's become. I wish I could make him stop."

"Then why don't you talk to him?" offered Emma, lifting an arm to wrap it around her best friend's slender shoulders. "Bonnie and I tried to the whole time you were gone. I know Bill even had a go at it. But, if he'll listen to *anyone*, it's *you*, Ellie."

"I don't know," Belle said. "Maybe I should just give up on him. I'll be going to Harvard in a few months, so why should I even care?"

"Come on, Ellie," Bonnie said, reaching out to lay a slender hand on the beautiful brunette's leg. "That's not you. You care about everyone."

"Yeah," Caroline agreed, resting her own delicate limb on their friend's jean covered leg. "You're Belle Denbrough. Savior of the Cursed and the Damned."

Belle laughed softly, rolling her dark chocolate brown eyes, while Emma hugged her up against her side once more.

A couple of hours later, Bonnie, Caroline, and Emma left, and Belle, as well as Bill and their parents, started to get ready for bed.

After showering, Belle dressed in black panties, and a flowing, silk, almost ivory colored oversize sleep shirt, then sat down on her bed to brush her hair.

While doing so, she was unable to help her gaze from drifting over onto her phone, where it was plugged in and charging on her nightstand. As she looked at it, the screen lit up, and the item vibrated against the furniture's top, since she had it on 'Silent', with an alert about a text message from Caroline, but she ignored it.

Pausing in her task, Belle set her brush to the side on her bed, then reached for her phone, picking it up off of the nightstand. The charging cord was fortunately long enough that she could do so without having to unplug it.

Bringing up her text messages, she selected the one that had Patrick's name on it, and saw the last message they'd exchanged was a week before Georgie's death. She couldn't help but laugh softly at the sight of the old date on it, but she resisted the urge to scroll back through the texts, which would be like reading a novel, since they not only messaged each other so much when they were dating, but even before that, when they were friends.

Instead, Belle touched the box where you type a new message, and paused, as it brought up the keyboard, her thumb held barely an inch above the screen, as she thought about not only what to say, but if she should text him at all.

This was her first night back in her house, did she really want to risk what hope she had at getting through to Patrick on it?

Sighing, Belle closed out the text message, clicked off the phone, and set it back down on the nightstand, then returned to her task of brushing her endless lush rich brown curls. But, as she did so, her gaze would once more trail over onto the item, the screen lighting up every once and a while from various alerts, the majority of which were texts one from her friends, and not just the main three she'd seen earlier. She guessed word had gotten out she was back.

"Screw it," Belle sighed after a few moments, tossing her hair brush to the side once more, then grabbing her phone, and bringing the text message with Patrick back up, typing, 'Can we talk?', then sending it, and watching as the new bubble popped up in the conversation, under the fresh time, followed by 'Delivered' below it, before she quickly clicked off the phone, and set it back down, returning to combing her tresses again.

Once she was done with that, she got up to pad over to her dresser, her bare slender feet making not a sound on the hardwood mahogany flooring, which she had a huge plush round rug on for her bed and the areas surrounding it, to put her brush back where it belongs,

which was where her gaze fell upon some items that looked so out of place in her clean, feminine room, aside from the bunch of balloons that were still swaying back and forth by her closet, and that was the orange prescription bottles, with their white labels secured around them, and the matching childproof caps.

While in England, Belle had talked to a professional mental health Doctor, a Psychiatrist, who'd put her on a few medications, mainly pills to help her sleep, and assist with her anxiety, both of which she knew she was going to need tonight, her first back in her house, back in her home town, after Georgie.

Sighing softly, Belle grabbed the bottles, one at a time, and opened them to get a single of the pills from each, before she placed them back where her Mom had put them on her dresser.

She didn't have anything to drink, so she'd have to either pop them dry, which she knew wasn't a good idea, as she never swallowed them in time, causing her mouth to be tainted with that horrible pill taste, or she'd have to venture downstairs to get some water.

Belle flicked a glance over at her phone. She still hadn't gotten a response from Patrick, but what had she expected? She scolded herself for getting her hopes up, then turned on her heel, and headed from her room.

The house downstairs was dark and quiet, except for the light they left on in the living room, as Bill and their parents were upstairs as well.

Walking into the kitchen, Belle set her pills down on the counter, then grabbed a glass from the cabinet, before opening the fridge to fetch the water pitcher, unable to help pausing to look at all of the containers of food left over from the girls earlier, including the cake she and Bill had brought home, a sight which caused her to smile softly, then shake her head, before she grabbed the filtered water pitcher, and poured about half a glass.

Setting it back inside, she closed the fridge door, then snatched her pills up off the counter, quickly popping them into her mouth, before

placing the glass of water to her lips, and drinking nearly all of the cold water within to wash the items down.

Lowering the glass, Belle grimaced slightly at the feeling of the pills sliding down her throat, and raised the cup to drink more, lowering it, now almost empty, after feeling she had enough to carry the items to her stomach.

Standing in the kitchen, her feet quickly getting cold on the tile of the floor, she was just about to down the rest of the water, then put the glass in the dishwasher, when she caught sight of movement out of the corner of her eye.

Looking over, Belle's grip on the glass loosened, and the item fell from her hand, shattering as it hit the ground, but she was deaf to the sound, as she stood in shock at what she'd just seen, a flash of yellow, followed by the sound of feedback from a walkie talkie, as a child sized figure went right by her, and past the open basement door, into the cellar.

Her breathing became erratic, and the pace of her heartbeat picked up, while she stared at the spot where the image of what had to be Georgie had vanished.

The other noises around her soon penetrated the eerier silence that had followed the sounds of the child, as Bryan, Katherine, and Bill came rushing downstairs, having heard the glass shatter.

"Belle?" Katherine called in a panic. "Belle, are you all right?"

"Whoa, whoa," Bryan said, throwing out an arm to halt his wife and son from entering the kitchen, when, as he got their first with his long legs, he saw the broken glass littering the floor. "Stop."

Lifting his gaze to his daughter, he went on. "Belle? Are you okay? Are you hurt? Don't move. There's glass everywhere."

"Belle?" Bill said to his sister, his brow furrowing at the sight of her standing there, still as a statue, looking into the cellar. "B-B-Belle, can you h-h-hear me?"

"Sweetie?" Katherine added on, her own worry rising when she saw

her baby girl's position.

Reaching over, Bryan flicked on the kitchen light, which illuminated the shards of glass on the floor. "Okay, just stay there, baby."

Moving carefully, he avoided the remains of the drinking cup, and reached Belle's side, where he placed a hand on her back, an action which startled her out of her trance. "Belle?"

"Dad," Belle breathed, flicking a glance over at the basement entrance, before returning her gaze to her Father, and realizing what had happened, as the sight of the glass gleaming in the kitchen light. "Oh, shoot. I'm so sorry. Do you need help cleaning it up?"

"No, no," Bryan quickly spoke up. "It's okay, honey. It's all right. Let me just get you out of here and I'll clean it up. Come on."

Slipping his arm around her waist, he bent down to loop the other beneath her knees, then use the hold to lift her up from the floor, and carry her over to where Katherine and Bill were, which was when he set her down.

"Bill, would you go to the garage, and get the broom?" Bryan asked, while he turned to survey the mess.

"S-S-S-Sure," Bill stuttered, before looking up at his sister. "Are you really all right, Ellie?"

"I'm fine, tough guy," Belle said, offering her brother the best reassuring smile she could, while lifting her hands to cup either side of his face. "Just help Dad."

"Okay," Bill replied, nodding, then turning to head for the garage door.

"Did you cut yourself, baby?" asked Katherine, looking down at her daughter's ankles and feet.

"No, I'm fine, I promise," responded Belle. "I just came down to take my pills, and something startled me. That's all. I'm sorry about the glass, Mom."

"Oh, sweetheart," sighed Katherine, reaching up to touch one side of her daughter's beautiful face. "It's only a cup. I'm just glad **you're** not hurt."

Belle nodded, smiling softly at her Mom, before she turned, and headed back upstairs, since her parents weren't going to let her help clean up.

Belle's mind was a whirl as she made her way up the steps. What the Hell had she seen? She knew what she **thought** she'd seen, Georgie, but she also knew that was impossible. It must've been a hallucination.

She'd had those. For the entire first few months after Georgie, it was pretty much all she'd experience in her waking hour, false sightings of her beloved lost little brother. And she had medication for those, but she hadn't taken one tonight, since she hadn't had a single hallucination in nearly half a year. Being back in Derry must be causing them to return.

Sighing softly, Belle lifted a slender hand to gently rub her beautiful face. She hadn't even be back 12 hours, and she was already losing her mind again.

Reaching the top of the staircase, she was just about to turn to head into her room on the left, where she caught sight of a light coming from Georgie's to the right, and it caused her brow to furrow, as she didn't remember it being that way when she'd gone down to the kitchen, but maybe her Mom had turned it on.

Belle gazed at the open doorway for a few seconds, then started slowly, quietly, padding over toward it, holding her breath, before stepping inside her lost little brother's room, where her eyes fell upon the interior for the first time.

Her dark brown eyes scanned the room, absolutely everything was the same as it'd been the day he died, aside from the fact that her Mom had obviously been cleaning it, just like her own.

Moving inside, Belle came to a halt by his bed. It was so small, but

then so was Georgie. She'd almost forgotten how little he'd been. Even at almost eight years old, he was still so small, so innocent. Why didn't she go with him that day? Why did she let her Mom's nagging over the stupid acceptance letter prevent her from saying, 'Yes.' to Georgie asking her to race the boat Bill made with him? She could've saved him. She knew it.

Shaking off those thoughts, as she knew once she went down that road, there was no coming back, she reached out, and picked up something off of the bed. It was Georgie's baby blanket. It was blue, had a satin trim, and was big enough that it could still fit around his shoulders and tie at the neck, allowing him to wear it like a cape.

Cradling it against her chest, Belle lowered her head, so that she could bury her nose in it, where she inhaled a deep breath of its scent. It still smelled like him.

Choking out a sob, her legs gave out beneath her, and she collapsed to the floor, on the little rug Georgie had by his bed, for when it was cold out, clutching the baby blanket to herself like a life jacket, while she broke down crying, soon bringing her legs up in front of her, bent at the knee, as she folded her body into itself as much as possible.

Thankfully, neither Bill nor their parents had heard her sobs, so Belle had been able to collect herself after a few moments, then make her way back into her room, where she carried Georgie's blue, satin trimmed blanket.

Closing the door until it was only open a few inches, she padded over to her bed, and sat down on the edge, gathering the blanket in her lap. She didn't care if it made her look weak, she was keeping it with her.

Expelling a deep breath, Belle's gaze was drawn down to her phone, when the screen lit up, and she saw Bonnie, Caroline, and Emma had been going back and forth in the four's group text.

Sighing, she reached out to grab her phone, going to tell her friends she was heading to bed now, when she saw, at the very bottom of the screen, the top of a text message alert for one from Patrick. That was

all she could see of it, just his name.

Belle quickly swiped the message open. It simply said, 'Sure.'

She smiled softly, unashamed of the touch of renewed hope that flared up inside of her at the single word, and began to message him back, suggesting a time and place to meet tomorrow to talk, when there was suddenly a knock at her bedroom window, which was covered with the curtains for the night, from behind her, causing her to gasp loudly, as she spun around on her bed to face it.

Her heart was in her throat, and she was just contemplating if she could get to her closet, namely her gun, in time, when she heard a familiar voice call her name from the other side of the pane of glass.

"Belle?" came Patrick's voice.

"Patrick?" Belle exclaimed in disbelief, though, if she took more than a split second to think about it, it actually made sense, she was simply so thrown, which was quickly becoming the usual for her.

Right outside of her bedroom window was the roof of the front porch, and, when she and Patrick had been dating, he'd come through her window, which she'd always leave unlocked for him, all the time, especially at night, able to easily traverse the porch, and climb up onto its roof, due to his tall, lanky form, as well as, of course, his determination to get to his beautiful, beloved girlfriend.

Setting her phone back down on the nightstand, Belle tucked Georgie's blanket behind her nearest pillow, then got to her feet, and moved around the bed, over to the window, where she pushed aside the curtains, revealing Patrick on the other side.

"Oh, my gosh," she breathed in disbelief at seeing him.

Belle went to unlock the window, only to find it already was. She either hadn't locked it, or it'd been locked, and she'd, out of habit, unlocked it. Nonetheless, she lifted up the window, then shifted her dark brown gaze onto Patrick, who immediately began climbing his tall, lanky form through the now open space.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"What? You said you wanted to talk," Patrick replied, sending her a smirk, as he placed his hand on the top of the window frame, while pulling the last of his long legs inside.

"I didn't mean tonight," said Belle, even while she found herself closing the window behind him. "And I certainly didn't mean for you to come over right over and climb through my window."

"You're the one who left it unlocked, Princess," answered Patrick, gesturing at the window with a fresh smirk.

"Habit," Belle admitted with a sigh, even as she felt a tug at her heart at hearing him use his once familiar nickname for her, before she followed after him further into her room, soon stepping in front of him, halting him from going any further. "Patrick, you can't be here."

"Why not?" Patrick asked, gazing down into her chocolate hued orbs with his own sapphire blue, before a renewed smirk once more alight his face. "I used to do it all the time, remember?"

"Yes, I remember," said Belle, before flicking a glance at her bedroom door, which she'd left open a crack.

Turning, she padded over to the entrance, lifting her slender hands to slowly, quietly, close it all of the way, before she turned to face the interior of her room once more, where she found Patrick now striding around, absently looking at all of the things on display, and she couldn't help her anger from fading, at least a bit, at the sight of him, once again in her bedroom, like nothing happened, like no time had passed.

Crossing her arms over her chest, suddenly well aware of the fact that all she had on was a pair of black panties, and an oversize short sleeved silk ivory colored sleep shirt, while he was still clad in his attire from earlier that day at the school, Belle sighed softly.

"Patrick," she began, but he swiftly cut her off, as he came to a halt by her desk of new camera equipment.

"So, what'd you want to talk about?" Patrick asked, flicking a glance at her, before he turned, and strode over to her bed, where he

perched himself on its end. "How you dumped me with no explanation? How you left town for almost a year? How you're suddenly back and already feeling like you can pass judgement on me?"

Belle sighed softly, lifting a hand to rub her beautiful face. She didn't have the energy for this, hence why she'd wanted to do this tomorrow, and, also, in public. Not that she believed Patrick would *ever* hurt her. It'd just maybe be a bit easier with other people around, not the two of them all alone in her bedroom, of all places.

"You know why I had to break up with you, Patrick," she said. "It's the same reason I can "pass judgement" on you." She began to move closer to him, as she went on. "Though I never have." Pausing once more, she sighed. "You can drop the whole tough guy act when you're with me too. I see right through it. I always have."

At that, Patrick looked away, and didn't meet her gaze for a long moment, that seemed to stretch into an eternity, before he finally looked back up at her.

"Fine," he replied, suddenly getting to his feet, and striding over to stand right in front of her, an action that made her feel about the size of a doll, but she held her ground, lifting her gaze higher so she could continue to meet his. "You want to get real? What the Hell happened to you, Ellie?"

Belle scoffed softly. "How can you ask me that? You *know* what happened, Patrick. Georgie *died*. And *I* saw it."

"Yeah, he hit his head, and fell into a sewer drain," said Patrick, before laughing softly. "What the fuck's so special about that?"

Fresh anger rose up inside Belle at his words. She knew he had no idea what he was talking about, no one but she knew the truth concerning Georgie's death, but his actions still infuriated her.

"Fine," she repeated his earlier word, before quirking a dark brow at him. "You want to pour salt into open wounds?" Reaching behind him, she snatched an item out of his back pocket that she'd first noticed when he climbed through her window, but pushed aside due

to her confusion and slight anger, then managed to grab the second item, the outline of which she'd seen through the denim of his jeans, from the other side, when he instinctively turned to try and stop her from getting the first. "What the Hell are these?" She held up the can of hair spray and the lighter, swiftly moving her hands when he immediately tried to grab the items back. "Is this how you get your kicks now? Huh? Is this what you torture my little brother and his friends with?"

Patrick was able to snatch the items back from her the second time he attempted to do so, standing with them in his hands for a moment, before he tucked them into his rear pockets once more, flicking a glance at her as he did so. "There's that judgement again."

Belle watched him walk back over to her bed, then turn, and sit down on its end once more, actions during which her rage again deflated a good bit.

"Why, Patrick?" she sighed softly, padding slowly after him. "Just explain it to me. Why Henry Bowers? Why the tormenting? Why the fire?"

"You wouldn't understand," Patrick replied, it now being his turn to sigh softly, as he rested one hand on his knee, refusing to meet her approaching gaze.

"Maybe I would if you talked to me," Belle said, coming to a halt in front of him, where she tried to lift one of her delicate limbs to touch a side of his handsome face, but he quickly swatted the limb away, an action that caused a stab of hurt to touch her heart, even as she realized that she could take her own advise. That maybe Patrick would understand why Georgie's death was so hard on her, and why she had to leave to deal with it, if she'd just talk to him.

But she couldn't imagine inflicting such horrors upon someone she loved, whether it be her beloved little brother Bill or her ex-boyfriend that she still loved with all of her heart Patrick, and, unbeknowst to her, that was basically the exact same reason the latter had for not wanting to talk to her.

"You think your parents and B-B-Billy are the only ones you hurt?"

Patrick asked, finally looking up at her, and the pain that was so evident in his eyes, which she always forgot were blue, until she saw them, made her look past his mocking of her little brother's stutter. "The only ones you abandoned?"

"I'm sorry," Belle spoke softly, her eyes glistening with a light sheen of tears, as his words caused her to remember all she'd put the people she loved through, including, she now realized, the young man in front of her, even if it truly hadn't been her fault, and nothing she could've prevented. "I didn't mean to hurt you, Patrick."

"Don't flatter yourself, Princess," Patrick scoffed, before suddenly snapping to his feet, and moving away from her, needing to get out of her reach, not only her physical touch, but the range of her smell. She still had that intoxicating, beautiful scent of honey and rose petals that, for the rest of his life, would make him weak in the knees. And her eyes. God, her eyes were like liquid pools of dark chocolate, that he knew he could happily swim in forever. Not to mention her voice. Her beautiful, soft Australian accented voice, that was the only sound in the World that could soothe the raw aches of his very soul, even if she was just reciting the phone book.

Belle's heart continued to ache at his harsh actions, though she understood them. She always had. This was an almost mirror image of how he'd been when they first met and started to get close, and exactly how he'd act when he'd get mad once they began dating, his sudden fits of rage something she never fully understood, but was now beginning to, after having her psychological breakdown.

Again, he'd never hurt her. In fact, she'd always been the only one who could ever calm him down. But she'd been gone for eight months, and he was around Henry and the others almost 24/7. They were already a bad influence on anyone, but for someone like Patrick, it was like a heroine addict having a limitless supply of drugs.

"I should go," Patrick spoke up, as he stood facing her window, snapping her from her thoughts.

"Okay," Belle replied, even though every inch of her didn't want him to, and she could tell by the tense way his lean shoulders were being

held that he felt the same way too. "Can we still talk sometime?"

"Yeah, maybe," answered Patrick, turning his head to look at her, and there was a pause, where silence fell over the pair, before he continued toward the window, throwing it open, then climbing out, and, before she knew it, he was gone, leaving her with a cold, empty feeling.

Belle walked over to the window, which he'd left ajar, and placed her delicate hands on the frame, gazing out into the darkness of the street, illuminated by the lights that lined the road, and people's porch lanterns, until he became visible again, stepping into the street, after descending her porch.

She found herself being that silly girl who would hope the guy would turn around and look at her one last time, just like he had at the school earlier, and she didn't care that her heart soared with joy, as well as a fresh touch of hope, when Patrick did just that, pausing to gaze up at her in her window, before facing forward again, where he picked up his pace, jogging off down the street, soon disappearing once more.

"Patrick," Belle breathed in a myriad of emotions, watching him until she could no longer see him, and then merely gazing at the last spot he'd been in, while a fresh light sheen of tears glistened in her dark brown eyes.

After that, Belle had nothing left to do but go to sleep, so she began dressing down her bed, taking off the decorative pillows of her new bed set, and putting them away in her walk-in closet for the night, before returning to push back the comforter enough so that she could climb under it.

Just about to switch off her lights, she paused when she saw a figure hovering in the open crack of her bedroom door, which she'd quietly returned to its previous state, after Patrick had left, and she smiled softly when she realized it was Bill, dressed in his blue PJ pants, and a white t-shirt.

"Hey, sweetie," Belle greeted him, as she sat down on the side of her

bed, before quirking a dark brow at him, while he pushed open the door, stepped inside, then closed it back to how it'd been before. "Can't sleep?"

"N-N-No," Bill replied, padding over to her with his bare feet, and coming to a halt in front of her, where she reached out to take up his hands with her own. "Can I s-s-s-sleep wi-with you?"

"Of course," Bill answered, her soft smile brightening, and she lifted his hands to her lips, pressing a kiss to them, before she met his blue eyes, a mirror image of their Father's, with her own dark brown, which were a perfect replica of their Mother's. "Come on."

She nodded behind her at her bed, then released her hold on his arms, pausing to turn off her lights, before she slipped beneath the covers, reaching out, as her little brother made his way around to the other side, to pull down the comforter for him, then watching as he got in, and she helped him cover up, before doing the same for herself, the two next placing their heads on the pillows, causing them to lay facing once another.

"So, what are you, Eddie, Richie, and Stan doing tomorrow?" Belle asked, with a fresh soft smile.

"We're going to the B-B-Barrens," replied Bill, an answer that caused her smile to falter. "Do you w-w-want to come?"

"Would you be terribly angry if I said, 'No'?" Belle responded.

"Of c-c-c-course not," said Bill, offering her a reassuring smile. "I'm s-s-s-sure there's pl-plenty you'd r-r-rather d-do."

"There's just a few things I need to take care of in town," explained Belle. "But, as soon as I'm done, if you guys are still there, I'll catch up, okay? I promise."

"Okay," Bill replied, now smiling softly himself at the idea of her taking part in his search for Georgie.

"Just. . . be careful, okay?" Belle went on, reaching out to gently grasp his nearest hand. "There's a lot of different ways you guys could get hurt down there. Not to mention the cow Mom will have if she

finds out. Eddie's Mom too."

Bill laughed softly about her words concerning Mrs. K, and nodded his head against the pillow. "S-S-S-Sure, Belle."

Belle nodded, doing her best to smile confidently back at him, but she knew it was an action that didn't quite meet her eyes, since the danger she was speaking of mostly had to do with what she believed was living nearby the Barrens, in the sewers. Fortunately, Bill didn't seem to notice, as he, instead, saw a corner of Georgie's baby blanket sticking out from behind his sister's pillow, and he gently pulled his hand free from under hers, in order to fetch it.

"G-G-Georgie," he said, while he gazed down at the item.

"Yes," Belle sighed sadly. "I convinced myself to go into his room, and, when I saw this, I knew I couldn't leave it there." She reached out, and touched their little brother's blanket, rubbing her slender thumb over one of the satin trimmed edges.

"I miss him s-s-s-so much, Ellie," Bill replied, looking up at her from the item, and she could see the tears glitening in his eyes even in the darkness of the room.

"I know, baby," Belle answered, her heart aching at the pain so evident in her little brother's gaze, and she moved her hand up from the blanket to grasp his own limb, unable to help the fresh sheen of tears from rising up in her own chocolate orbs, as she thought about Georgie. "I do too."

Leaning over, she pressed her lips to Bill's forehead in a lingering sweet little kiss, then rested her own forehead against his, as the pair closed their eyes, and that's how they soon fell asleep, side by side, holding hands over their beloved lost brother's baby blanket.

- Author's Note - All right, guys! There's Chapter Three! I hope you all enjoyed it. I had a lot of fun writing it. The scene between Patrick and Belle was a bit of a challenge, but I hope it came out good. I tried to make it as perfect as possible, since, while they've known each other and dated for years, it's the first true interaction you, the

audience, are seeing between them, as well as their first true interaction in almost a year in the story. Plus, it gave you guys some hints that he'll have a bit of his story from the book, if any of you have read it. If not, I'll do my best to describe it all once we get to it in the story.

Anyway, next Chapter, Belle will meet Beverly, Ben, possibly Mike (since he's the cousin of one of Belle's best friends in this story), and we'll find out just how Patrick's fate with differ from the movie. ;)

With that, I, again, hope you enjoyed, and don't forget to review!

4. The Barrens

- Author's Note - Wow! I seriously don't even know what to say. You guys are simply amazing! The favorites, the follows, and, most importantly, the reviews just keep coming in, even days after updating the story. I'm so flattered!

HUGE thanks to **LittleGinger1216**, **MedievalWarriorPrincess**, **Nirvana14**, **HermioneandMarcus**, **zoe danvers**, **chelsnichole12**, **SpellSlaughterWithoutLaughter**, **Alice**, **ReedusLover15**, and **LoveFiction2017** for reviewing!

Here's the next Chapter, and it reveals what Patrick's fate will be in the story, as opposed to what it is in the movie. So, I hope you all enjoy it, and, as always, don't forget to review!

The next morning, Belle got dressed in a dark blue denim jacket, a simple fitted grey t-shirt, black skinny pants, and a pair of black women's combat boots, pinned a few of her endlessly long lush chocolate curls back at her right temple, then grabbed her wine colored leather backpack from Grafae, which she'd prepared for the day, and headed out.

Her Mom let her borrow her black Mini Cooper Countryman, so she could get around town, while Bill had left earlier to meet up with Eddie, Richie, and Stanley, via their beloved bicycles. Belle had a bike too, but it was more of a mountain bike, for when she and the girls would go hiking and such, plus she was almost 18, so driving was simply the most sensible option.

Belle's first stop was none other than the street of Witcham. She hadn't been back there since Georgie's death, but she needed to document everything she could concerning what happened to her little brother that day.

Parking along the sidewalk, across the road from where the sewer drain was located, she grabbed her main new camera out of her backpack, which rested on the front passenger seat, then climbed out, closing the door behind her.

Belle's heart was beating so fast, she felt as though it was going to burst out of her chest like the creature in *Alien*, which had been one of her and Patrick's favorite movies to watch together, as well as its equally superior sequel, but she forced herself across the street, her eyes glued to where Georgie had been pulled down to his death by the Clown.

Falling into a crouch about halfway over the road, she lifted the camera to her beautiful face, got the sewer drain in frame and focus, then snapped the picture, before lowering the item, as she rose back to her feet, and continued closer, her breathing now becoming slightly shaky, while her mind flashed back to that horrible day.

Shaking off the feelings those memories brought, Belle once more got to her knees, now significantly nearer to the culvert, and took its picture again.

The last shot she wanted to get, she'd have to be as close to the opening as her little brother had been when he'd suddenly lost his arm, so she paused for a moment, taking in a deep breath, then releasing it, before moving nearer still, and bending down on all fours, her elbows resting on the harsh pavement, where she aimed the lense inside of the dark sewer drain, then took a photo, the flash going off this time, to help illuminate the area, though she planned to brighten the image on her laptop later anyway.

Getting to her feet, and backing away, as quickly as possible, without stumbling or falling, Belle sighed in relief, finally tearing her gaze away from the culvert, and lifting it to the porch of Mrs. Sterling.

Moving around the corner the house sat on, she saw the older woman's car wasn't in the driveway, so she swiftly cut across the front yard, then went up the steps of the patio, positioning herself as close to where she remembered Mrs. Sterling standing that day as possible, and lifted the camera, aimed toward the street, taking another picture.

Belle could tell, even without having snapped the photo, that the older lady would've seen Georgie's odd position by the sewer drain that day, yet hadn't thought anything curious was going on, not even once the little boy began crawling away, arm missing, blood spewing

everywhere, crying in pain, and the knowledge caused a near tidal wave of anger to rise up in her, but she forced it away, giving herself both a mental, and a bit of a physical, shake, as she quickly climbed down from the front porch, then made her way back to the Mini Cooper.

Derry Public Library

Once in town, Belle again parked her Mom's car on the side of the street, then grabbed her backpack from the passenger seat, got out, locked up the Mini Cooper, and headed inside.

She wasn't quite sure where to start looking, but she knew, if she was going to find anything out about the Clown, it wouldn't be on the Internet; especially since she'd spent a good portion of her time away doing so, and had found nothing that'd warranted enough attention to be talked about in the rest of the World; it'd be in the very pages of the books of Derry, a town very much seemingly lost or stuck in time, hence locations like the arcade and the building she was now in.

Unsurprisingly though, the library was mostly deserted, aside from the two Librarians, who were both older ladies with glasses, as well as a couple of adults.

Belle's brow quirked in surprise though, when she found a boy, who had to be Bill's age, sitting at one of the tables, surrounded by books, an iPod and earbuds, and what looked like pages of the aforementioned texts, that had been copied on a printer, while his backpack hung off of the rear of his chair.

Unable to help smiling softly, at the sight of the cutie, whom she'd never seen before in town; and, aside from the year she'd been in Australia as a child, and, of course, the eight months she'd just returned from spending in England, she'd lived in Derry all her life, so she knew everyone; she made her way into the stacks, soon having a couple of books weighing her down, causing her to begin looking for a place to sit.

Belle's gaze instinctively drifted over to the young boy once more, and she couldn't stop herself from walking to his table.

"Hi," she spoke in her sweet Australian accented voice, causing him to look up at her, and she offered him a smile, even as his eyes widened at the sight of her. "Do you mind if I sit here?"

Belle gestured at the chair opposite him with her free hand, the other occupied holding the books she'd collected against her chest.

"Uh, n-no," he replied, immediately reaching out to move his stuff, so that she could have room on the table for hers. "Not at all. Go ahead."

"Thank you," Belle said, giving him a fresh smile, as she set the books down on the space he'd cleared, then removed her own backpack, placing it in the chair next to her, before she reached out, and pulled the one in front of her away from the table, then settled in.

Grabbing the first text off of her small stack, she placed it in front of herself, and opened it. She could see, from the top of her line of vision, that the young man was looking around the library, unknowingly to her taking inventory of all the free space, and wondering why the beautiful girl was sitting with him.

"You're new," Belle spoke up, drawing his attention back to her, while she lifted her own to him from the book.

"What?" he asked, his brow furrowing.

"You're new in town," Belle elaborated. "I've never seen you before."

"Oh," the boy breathed in realization, before nodding. "Yeah, I moved here a couple of months ago. I'm Ben. Ben Hanscom."

"Well, it's nice to meet you, Ben. Ben Hanscom," Belle replied, her words causing the cute chubby boy to even more adorably blush. "I'm Belle. Belle Denbrough."

"Denbrough? Oh!" Ben said once more, in fresh realization, at recognizing the last name. "Are you related to Bill?"

"I am," Belle answered with a nod, as well as a fresh soft smile. "Bill's my little brother." Her brow furrowing, she quirked one of the finely sculpted dark lines. "Do you know Bill?"

"Not really," responded Ben, shrugging. "We had a couple of classes together. But, I'm the new kid, so he probably didn't want to be seen with me."

"What's so bad about being the new kid?" Belle asked with a sugary sweet giggle.

"Well, it attracts the attention of Henry Bowers and his goons, for one," Ben explained, his words causing the happiness to fade from Belle's beautiful face.

"Have they been picking on you?" she inquired, leaning a bit forward, so she could lower her voice, and he could still hear her. It didn't bother her to speak of such things, but she knew it might be embarrassing for him, and she wanted him to be comfortable talking to her.

"Not yet," replied Ben. "I've been staying out of their way." Sighing, he went on. "For now, at least." Before Belle could speak up, the boy continued. "How come I've never seen **you** before?"

"Maybe you have," Belle playfully suggested, while she relaxed back in her chair. "And you just don't remember it."

"No," Ben laughed, finding the suggestion impossible. "No, I'd remember you."

Belle smiled across at him for a moment, then replied, as she sat up in her seat once more. "I've been out of town for quite a while. Visiting family friends. And I'm sorry that meant we didn't get to meet sooner, Ben." His blush returned, a sight that caused her grin to brighten, before she quirked a fresh brow at him, as she spotted something on the table in front of him, what looked like the back of one of those 99 cent postcards you get at the drug store. "Are you telling somebody all about the wonders of Derry, Maine?"

"Oh, no," Ben said, as he quickly picked up the item, shyly not wanting her to see what he'd written on it. "It's just a little note."

"For a girl?" Belle asked, raising a renewed dark brow over a sparkling chocolate hued orb, his reaction to the words, namely the

expression on his face, telling her all she needed to know, and she giggled sweetly.

"How'd you know?" inquired Ben.

Belle shrugged her slender shoulders, leaning forward, where she folded her denim clad arms overtop the open book in front of her. "Thirteen's a prime 'girl' age for boys."

Ben blushed once again, averting his gaze from hers, before ultimately looking up at her once more. "It's just a poem I picked out." Quirking his brow, he held out the postcard across the table to her. "Would you read it? I want to make sure it's good."

"Well, it'd help me to know who it's for," Belle replied, reaching over to take the item from him. "Every girl's different."

"Do you promise not to tell?" Ben asked, and it was so adorable how genuinely nervous and uncertain his voice sounded.

"Of course I do, sweetie," answered Belle, offering him a fresh soft smile, while she waited to look at the words etched on the postcard, until she knew whom they were directed toward.

"It's Beverly Marsh," Ben confessed, a gentle grin tugging at the corners of his lips, while a fresh flush of color took over his chubby cheeks.

Belle had to think for a moment, before she remembered whom he was talking about. How could she forget Beverly Marsh? She and Bill had shared their first kiss in the school play; Romeo & Juliet, of course; when the two had been in third grade.

She would always remember how proud Bryan was of his boy, as he, Belle, Georgie, and Kat sat in the audience watching, Belle with barely three year old Georgie in her lap.

"Beverly Marsh," Belle repeated, a bright smile breaking out across her beautiful face, even while she found herself disappointed she hadn't yet seen the girl in question, but she hadn't even been back in town 24 hours yet. There were plenty of people she still needed to see, including her friends' families, one of which she'd have to travel

outside of town to visit, that being Bonnie's Granddad Leroy and cousin Mike, on their farm. "Of course. **Such** a beautiful redhead."

"Yeah, she is," Ben said, as his blush somehow furthered, making him start to look like he'd been out in the sun too long.

Continuing to smile softly, Belle turned the postcard over in her hand, and looked down, in order to read the words written on it: *Your hair is Winter fire. January embers. My heart burns there too. - Secret Admirer*

"So, what do you think?" Ben asked, after the gorgeous young woman had been silent for more than long enough to take in the three sentences.

Belle lifted her sparkling chocolate brown eyes back to the young man, her soft smile slowly, but surely, extending into a brilliant one. "You're quite the little charmer, aren't you, Ben Hanscom?"

He chuckled softly, holding out his hand for the postcard, and she placed the item back in his grasp. "Is that a good thing?"

"A very good thing," Belle replied. "Girls love a guy who'll recite poetry for them."

Ben smiled, but, before either could say or do anything more, a familiar voice from outside reached them, even through the walls of the library, and Belle stood up in order to look out the nearest window, where, sure enough, she saw Bill, Eddie, Richie, and Stanley go by on their bikes, her little brother exclaiming, "Hi ho, Silver, away!"

"Shoot, I should go," Belle said, reaching out to close the book. "I promised Bill I'd meet up with he and his friends if I could."

"Oh, okay," Ben replied, unable to completely hid his disappointment, before nodding at the books she had. "Do you want me to look through those for you?"

Belle paused in her task, in order to lift her gaze to him from putting the text back on top of the small pile. "You'd do that for me?"

"I spend most of time here anyway," Ben answered, shrugging with his hands and his shoulders. "Just tell me what you're looking for, and I'd be happy to."

Smiling softly, Belle pushed the books closer to the young man. "Something specific to Derry. Something I can't find anything about on the Internet. Something most likely old and. . . not necessarily Human."

Ben's brow furrowed at her words, but he nonetheless nodded, and reached out to take the texts. "Okay."

Belle was surprised, to say the least, though she knew she shouldn't be. Children tend to be more open when things considered "unbelievable" are involved, so she grabbed a pen that sat nearby, which Ben had most likely used to write the poem on the postcard, and quickly jotted down her phone number on the edge of one of the pages he'd copied from a book with the printer in the library. "Let me know if you find anything."

"You got it, Belle," said Ben, meeting her gaze, and she offered him a fresh soft smile, before she snatched up her backpack from the next chair over.

"See you around, new kid," Belle spoke to him, as she slung one of the straps over a slender shoulder, then turned, striding from the library.

Belle couldn't believe her eyes when she turned a corner in the Mini Cooper, and saw an actual Starbucks sitting in between two other businesses, one of which was the book store Emma worked at. The coffee place had not been there when she'd left town, and she smiled as she thought of how much fun her best friend must have working next door to the place.

Knowing she couldn't pass this up, even though it wasn't as if the business was going anywhere, Belle pulled off to the side of the road, grabbed her phone from her backpack, then turned off the engine, and climbed from the vehicle.

Heading inside, Belle got her favorite drink, and was just lifting it to

her lips for the first sip, as she walked out the door, her beverage in one hand, while her keys and phone were held in the other, when she spotted someone walking toward her to the right, causing her to screech to a halt, before she collided with whoever it was.

"Oh, my God!" the person exclaimed, upon coming to the same realization she had, while Belle couldn't help the bright smile that lit up her beautiful face when she saw who it was. "I am so sorry. I wasn't paying attention."

"Beverly Marsh," Belle said, giving her endlessly long lushly curled chocolate brown hued head a gentle shake, while she lowered the drink from her lips. "I was just thinking about you."

Bev's brow furrowed, as she found herself looking at the gorgeous young woman, before realization dawned for a second time, causing it to smooth out. "Oh, my God. Belle! Belle Denbrough. Hi!"

"Hi, yourself!" exclaimed Belle, while she reached out to hug the redhead as best she could with her hands full. "How are you?"

"I'm good," replied Beverly, embracing Belle in return, then smiling up at her when they parted. "How are **you**? My Dad told me you were back in town."

"I'm good too," Belle nodded. "Thanks." Turning a bit at the waist, she gestured at the coffee shop. "Hey, do you have time? I was going to meet up with Bill and the others, but I'd love to sit down and talk with you."

"Oh, thanks," Bev said, waving a hand at the Starbucks. "But I'm not into coffee. Besides, I'm on my way to the pharmacy."

"Are you feeling all right?" Belle inquired, her brow immediately furrowing, as concern for the young girl flooded her.

"Yeah, I'm fine," reassured Bev, before she smiled softly, if not a bit uncomfortably. "That's. . . not why I'm going."

"Oh," Belle responded, as another realization dawned. She knew exactly what the beautiful redhead needed. Tampons. Or pads. Every girl had their preference. But she could also tell Beverly wasn't really

comfortable with the topic, making her figure it was either her first period, or one of them, so she dropped it.

"But I'd love to hang out with you sometime," Bev went on, before rolling her blue eyes. "It's not like I have tons of offers rolling in."

"Well, that's a shame," Belle said, next shrugging her slender shoulders. "Their loss though." She gazed questioningly at the girl. "Do you have a phone?"

"Oh, no," Bev answered, patting the pockets on her denim jeans, before smiling in a renewed uncomfortable manner. "Can't afford one."

"Oh," Belle spoke, suddenly realizing how privileged she must look, driving her Mom's somewhat expensive car, fresh from Starbucks, with the latest iPhone clutched in one hand. She wasn't exactly dressed to impress today, but her clothes *were* all designer. "Well, come on. I'll write my number down for you."

She nodded back at the coffee shop, offering Beverly a bright smile, both actions which the redhead returned, before following the brunette inside.

After parting ways with Beverly, Belle found herself driving by the library once more, as she continued on toward the Barrens, and she smiled softly as the sight of the place caused her to think of Ben.

What a sweet boy he was. Something Derry seemed to be chock full of. Both fortunate, and unfortunate, as the innocent didn't seem to last in this town, Georgie being a perfect example of that. She could only hope she could kill the Clown before it took anymore sweet children away from the World.

Continuing on, enjoying the time alone, as much as she loved her family and friends, feeling the air conditioning blowing on her, while the car was filled with the music she was playing off of her phone through the Mini Cooper's sound system, taking sips of her drink every once and a while, it wasn't long before Belle came upon another sight that caused her to instinctively slow the vehicle down.

Fortunately, traffic was literally never an issue in Derry.

It was what the townspeople, namely the young residents, called the Kissing Bridge. It was where kids came to make out, and carve their names into the wood of the old bridge railing.

Pulling the Mini Cooper to a halt, she placed it in park, turned off the engine, then, after reaching for her camera, where it sat in the passenger seat with her backpack, climbing out.

Closing the door behind her, she made her way around the front of the car, and toward the wooden railing, her rich dark chocolate hued orbs scanning all of the names, symbols, and such carved into the structure.

Smiling softly, Belle fell into a slight crouch, and lifted the camera, angling the lense, until some of the railing came into frame, then snapping a photo, before she moved down a few feet, and took another. Quite the history of horny teens she was documenting, but, for some reason, she found it sweet.

Continuing along, she raised her camera once more, when, through it, she saw something that caused her to start to slowly lower it. A pair of familiar names. Her and Patrick's.

Stepping closer, Belle fell into a crouch right in front of the wooden railing, and held her camera in one hand, while lifting the other to run her delicate fingertips over the indentations, sighing softly, mostly out of sadness, as she did so.

It wasn't even their full first names, like all of the others. It didn't say, "Belle + Patrick" in the big carved heart, it said, "Bellerick", something they'd come up with as a combination of their names, and Patrick had carved it, while she had surrounded it by the heart.

It'd felt silly at the same, especially since they never came to the Kissing Bridge. At least not for its intended purpose, they had their bedrooms for that, and more. They'd just been walking by; the night of the 4th of July, when the town was alive with excitement, festivities, and, of course, fireworks; hand in hand, when Patrick had joked they should add their names, so they did, using a pocket knife

he carried with him at the time. Somewhere between then and now, he'd obviously switched it for the can of hair spray and a lighter.

Sighing softly once more, Belle lifted the camera to her face, and took a photo of it, then got back to her feet, where she looked over the railing, her dark brow furrowing, at the sight of the dirt, leaves, and sticks that littered the hill that led down to the river obviously disturbed.

Raising her camera once more, she zoomed in on the area, and took a photo, before lowering the item, in order to look at it on the screen. It looked like someone, most likely more than one person, had gone down it in a hurry.

Lifting her gaze back to the hill, Belle gazed at it for a moment, before walking back over to the Mini Cooper, where she opened the passenger door, fetching her backpack from the seat, her phone from the console, and the keys from the ignition.

Tucking her phone into her back pocket, she locked up the car, then tucked the keys and her camera into her bag, which she next slung into place on her back, before moving toward the carved up wooden railing once more.

Climbing over it, Belle began down the hill, her small statue making it easier to traverse than whoever had done it before, plus she was, for the most part, taking her time, and being mindful of where she placed her feet, reaching out to steady herself on trees when she could, and she was able to reach the bottom without any injuries.

Walking through the trees, she looked around for signs of people, but didn't spot anyone. She knew Bill and his friends wouldn't have come this way, since there was a path big and safe enough for bikes near the Barrens, so who'd been so desperate to get down here?

Sighing softly, Belle came to the realization that it was most likely Henry and the others, probably chasing some poor cat or other small animal down into the woods to torment. She really didn't put anything past Bowers, she just hoped Patrick had enough sense left in him to realize when it was too much, but knowing he most likely didn't, especially if he felt he had some "showing off" to do for Henry

and the others, now that she, "the ex", was back in town.

Soon out of the woods, and walking alongside the stream, Belle took her camera out from her backpack, and began taking photos. The Barrens really was a pretty place. Also peaceful, with the only sounds being that of the babbling brook, and the noises of the various animals that resided in the area, namely the birds.

Looking up, then across, the water, a soft smile lit up her beautiful face, when she saw a bright red cardinal perched in one of the higher branches of the treeline.

Belle lifted her camera, and zoomed in as much as she could, but, in doing so, a lot of the quality was lost. She didn't want to try going across the water, namely as it would most likely startle the bird, and she truly wanted to get a photo of it, especially since she knew cardinals were supposed to be the a sign that someone you'd loved and lost were still watching over you, like an Guardian Angel, and, of course, that made her think of Georgie.

Looking around, Belle spotted a well a few feet from where she stood. It would not only get her a bit closer, but also higher up, making for a much better picture, so she began toward it, holding her camera in one hand, while she stepped up onto the rim, which was wide enough that at least she could stand on it with no problem, though someone taller, or a person who weighed more than she did, would probably falter.

Lifting her camera, she focused on the beautiful red bird once more, smiling brightly, when she got it in frame, and the quality, even with it still zoomed in all of the way, was infinitely better.

After snapping the photo, she zoomed out a bit, and took another, then zoomed out a bit more, just about to capture a third, when, from the hole in the well she was standing on, a bloody hand shot out, and grabbed her tightly by the ankle.

Screaming in shock, Belle's slender finger instinctively pressed down on the shutter, even as she lost her balance, and fell backward off of the rim, not seeing the flash on her camera go off, when the lens was

aimed down into the dark well, before she landed harshly on the ground.

Grunting in pain, able to feel rocks, sticks, and sharp pebbles poking at her through her clothing, she'd somehow managed to keep a hold of her piece of photpgraphy equipment, but her other hand now had a few tiny cuts on it, from where it landed on the treeline floor to instinctively try to soften the blow.

Setting the camera down, Belle used her good hand to push herself up into a sitting position, where she moved her injured limb in front of herself, using her nails to pick out a few splinters, as well as brush off the leaves and the dirt. She was barely bleeding, but her wrist was sore. Again, she didn't weigh much, but it was never good to put any weight on the limb, and she'd fallen hard on it.

Sighing, she lowered her injured hand onto her thigh, then looked up at the well, wondering what had made her fall. She knew she'd felt something grab her ankle, but what could it have been?

Belle shifted her gaze onto the river. Maybe Bill and his friends were nearby, she *had* been on her way to meet up with them, when curiosity about the hill had distracted her, and she wouldn't put it past Richie to go into the sewers. Maybe he'd seen her, and decided to scare her. She already extended a lot of curtisy to his humor, since she loved him so much, and his home life was less than ideal, to say the least, but this had *not* been funny.

Remembering her camera had gone off as she'd fallen, she fetched the item from where she'd placed it, and had to use her knees to help hold the item up, as her one hand was starting to throb.

Going through the pictures, one at a time, on the screen, Belle's heart dropped straight into the pit of her stomach, when she came upon the image she'd taken when she'd lost her footing on the well rim.

It was blurry, but the flash provided enough light, that she could tell what it was. Or, rather, who it was, and it was not Richie. It was Patrick, and his face, as well as nearly the entire front of his shirt, was soaked with blood, while his expression was simply terrified.

Looking back up at the well, Belle almost dropped her camera, in favor of getting to her feet, and rushing over to the rim, which she grasped with her hands, while she looked down into it.

"Patrick?" she called, her heart now beating so fast against the inside of her chest, she could actually feel her ribs starting to hurt. "Patrick!"

That Clown, that *thing*, it *was* in the sewers, and it was after the man she loved, despite everything, with all of her body, mind, heart, and soul.

No. No, it had already taken Georgie from her, it was *not* taking Patrick too.

Pulling off her backpack, Belle scooped up her camera, and tucked it away inside, then fastened it onto her back once more, before retrieving her phone from her rear pocket. It had, thankfully, been undamaged from the fall.

Bringing up the Derry Public Works website, she quickly found a map of the sewer system, which was basically a digital copy of the one her Dad had in his office at home, and located her spot on it, as well as the nearest entrance, then took off toward it.

Coming upon the sewer entrance, which had several thick tree branches hanging over the opening, Belle removed her backpack, setting it down on the pebble shoreline. She'd have to move fast, especially if she had to help an injured Patrick, so the less she had on her the better.

Pulling her phone from her pocket, she knew it was going to have to be her light, and it was thankfully still almost at 100% charge, since the flashlight used up a lot of battery power, then tucked it away, while she rose to her feet, and removed her denim jacket. Again, the less weight, the better.

Laying it over her backpack, she retrieved her phone once more, and pulled up the map of the sewers, then activated the flashlight, before stepping through the sewer entrance, lifting a slender hand to push away the gnarled branches that hung down over it, as she did so.

Belle was glad she'd chosen her combat boots to wear today, rather than sneakers, because the disgusting sewer water easily went up to her ankles, especially the further she got into the tunnel, using the light on her phone to illuminate her way.

Her heart was racing, and the sound of her blood pumping in her ears was almost deafening, though she managed to keep her breathing under control.

The sewers were a twisted maze of toxic water and dark circular tunnels, and Belle more than once felt she was going to gag at the smell, but that image from her camera, of a bloodied and terrified Patrick, fueled her movements.

Flicking a glance down at the phone, she saw there was a fork in the road coming up, and she couldn't help the sinking feeling she felt in her stomach. Which way did she need to go?

Remembering the well where Patrick had grabbed her ankle, she paused in order to locate it on the map, then trace it back to her spot, letting her know to keep going forward, rather than take the left.

Belle could feel the air in the sewers pulling at every inch of her, it was suffocating, and it made her skin crawl at the same time. It was that heavy, dense fog that had enveloped her when she'd first passed over the town line the previous day, only a hundred times worse, now that she was at the source.

She nearly jumped from her skin, when her ears were suddenly pierced by the sound of children laughing, and she looked over to see several small figures casting shadows down the tunnel she hadn't taken.

Giving herself a mental shake, she licked her lips, and continued on, but she didn't get more than a few feet, when a new sight had her screaming, then throwing her body back against the nearest wall, that of a child sized figure, this one wearing a yellow raincoat, rushing right by her, giggling.

Belle watched what looked exactly like Georgie, even his laugh was a mirror image of what she'd once hear every day, keep going, acting

like the sewers were the most fun place to be, and soon disappear down the other path.

Her chest rose and fall with the heavy, labored breaths she was now taking, and she could feel her hair, clothes, and even the bare skin of her arms becoming one with the sticky wall she was pressed against.

Groaning, she gently pulled herself away, and, had she not known any better, she'd have sworn there was glue, or some type of adhesive, on the wall, as she was actually finding it difficult to separate herself from it, and she whimpered a bit in pain when she was finally able to do so, while a sickening tearing sound echoed throughout the tunnels.

Breathing a sight of relief, Belle used the light on her phone to check her arms. Where they had touched the wall, they were red, and even kind of blistered, while a flash of the lantern at it revealed a few of her endlessly long dark brown hairs stuck to it. The wall had actually pulled some from her scalp.

She was so busy looking at the scene in disbelief, that she didn't notice something lowering down from the ceiling right above her, but she soon heard it, and she looked over to see a snake slithering onto her shoulder.

Screaming, Belle completely abandoned her hold on her phone, carelessly dropping it, as she used the hand to swat away the animal. Unfortunately, in doing so, she backed against another wall, where a huge, hairy tarantula climbed onto her other limb.

Shrieking once more, she flailed the limb, sending the creature flying, then, by way of the light still working on her phone, which was now floating face down in the water, she saw another snake moving around, and up, one of her legs.

Furiously, Belle shook it off, but, as soon as she did, another came down from the ceiling, and slithering into her endless chocolate curls. She screamed, reaching into her hair, where she got a hold of the snake, throwing it away, but she was in such a state of panic now that she lost her balance, and fell back onto her butt in the water.

Panting heavily for breath, she looked up, and saw, through the cracks in the walls, what seemed to be millions of roaches, spiders, snakes, maggots, cenepides, and various other creepy crawlies, breaking free, making the curved structures look like they were actually moving, while the water she now sat in, one hand on either side of herself, was quickly filling with snakes, all making straight for her.

Now crying, Belle lifted her hands up, and placed them over her ears, in an attempt to block out all of the horrible sounds coming from the insects and such, clenching her eyes shut, to keep from seeing them, while she found herself speaking out loud.

"Please," she begged in between sobs, her beautiful face wet with her tears, as well as some sewer water that had splashed onto her. "Please! Please, stop it! Stop it! *Please!*"

Belle screamed the last word at the top of her lungs, and, suddenly, everything went quiet, but it wasn't like she'd gone deaf. Just, all of the hisses from the snakes and roaches, the crawling of the bugs and spiders, it all disappeared, and, slowly, she lowered her hands, opened her eyes, then lifted her head from where she'd lowered it so much that her chin had been touching the top of her chest.

What she saw instead of all of the creepy crawlies, was not better, and, in a way, it was worse. It was the Clown. The fucking Clown.

There it stood. It was so tall and lanky. From her current position, sitting down in the water, it looked almost seven feet tall. It wore an old clown costume, one that looked like what the Circus performers would wear in the late 1800s or early 1900s, and had bright orange hair. Its face was painted completely white, aside from the two thick red lines that went up from the corners of its crimson mouth to past where its eyebrows should be, and, of course, it had a red nose.

Belle's fear, despite elevating, though in a different manner than the bugs, snakes, and spiders had caused her, was beginning to be overridden, when she saw that the Clown's lips were smeared with what had to be fresh blood, and her mind flashed back to the image on her camera of Patrick.

"What did you do?" Belle found herself asking It, before a tidal wave of rage washed over her. "What did you do to him, you monster?!"

The Clown mocked a look of surprise, then lifted one of its long arms, and pointed at the water a few feet in front of her. She followed its direction, and her heart sank when she saw, floating in the sewage, Patrick's can of hairspray.

"No," Belle sobbed, maneuvering onto her knees, then reaching out to grab the item out of the water, as her very soul itself sank with despair. "No, no."

Her other hand landed on the floor of the tunnel, below the surface of the sewage, and fell upon another item, which, when she lifted it up in her grasp, saw it was the young man's lighter.

Belle's sadness was quickly pushed aside, to make room for her anger, as she lifted dark brown eyes now aglow with rage to the Clown, who was smiling at her, and she somehow got to her feet quickly, flicking the lighter open with one finger, before holding it out in front of her, clicking it on, then moving the can of hair spray behind it, and pushing down on the nozzle.

The flammable liquid sprayed out, hit the fire of the lighter, and exploded into a burst of flames. She heard the Clown shriek in surprise and pain, and, when she eased up on the nozzle, It was gone.

Sagging back against the newest wall, Belle breathed heavily, in a mixture of relief, while also trying to recover from the events of the last few moments.

Once she'd collected herself, at least enough to form coherent thoughts, she looked down at the items in her hands, and felt a fresh wave of sobs begin to overtake her.

Sliding down the wall, Belle collapsed into a crouch, crying, while her dirty, wet, wounded fingers closed tightly around the can of hair spray, and the lighter. Had she really lost another person she loved so damn much? Had that fucking Clown really won another battle in their war? After she'd been back in town not even 24 hours?

No. No, she refused to give up this time. When she'd watched Georgie disappear into that sewer drain, his body had never been found. She still hoped it would, mainly to help Bill grieve and move on, rather than swear until the end of time that he's still alive. But she was not going to do that again. She was going to keep going, until she either found Patrick alive, or found definitive proof that he'd perished down here.

Belle looked over at where her phone was floating. While she'd been sobbing, the light on it had finally gone out. Moving the lighter to her other hand, she reached out, and picked up the phone. It was completely dead.

Sighing, she forced herself to her feet, and tucked the ruined item into her back pocket, before palming the lighter once more. It, combined with the hair spray, was now her only source of vision down here.

Holding the lighter out in front of her, she positioned the can of hair spray behind it, and continued walking, pressing down on the nozzle every once and a while to illuminate the way. Occasionally, she'd hear the laughter of children, catch sight of a flash of yellow out of the corner of her eye, pick up on the sound of feedback from a walkie talkie, but she shook them all off, and kept going.

Rounding a corner, she found light, actual sunlight, streaming down from above, and she quickly moved beneath it. Looking up, she saw she was now under the well which she'd been standing on when Patrick had grabbed her ankle.

Breathing a sigh of relief, a flare of hope soaring through her tired, aching body, she kept going, soon having to ignite the lighter, and press down on the nozzle of the hair spray can, when she got far enough from the hole in the ceiling that darkness began to envelope her again.

Her phone was dead, and, even though she'd gazed at the image of the map of the sewers for a while, she couldn't remember it in detail. Again, the tunnels were a maze. One of nightmares, and, if she were going the right way, how would she know? It had become clear that the Clown, whatever It was, could get into her head, that the images

of Georgie she'd begun seeing after his death hadn't been hallucinations, they'd all be *Its* doing. If It could make her see her little brother, if It could make her think she was being swarmed by bugs, spiders, and snakes, It could defiantly manipulate how she saw the sewers.

But she couldn't think the worst. She'd spent too long doing that. Even if it was just a body, she was going to find Patrick, or die trying. And, if she found him alive, the two of them were getting the Hell out of there, together, no matter what.

Belle felt like she'd been in the sewers for hours. But she knew, since she'd seen through the open well that the sun was still out, she actually hadn't. It'd been well past Noon when she stopped at the Kissing Bridge, an action that seemed so long ago now, so, if she *had* been down there for hours, it'd now be dark out, or, at least, getting there.

Her clothes, and even the bottom part of her endlessly long hair, felt heavy, from being soaked with the disgusting water. Her bones ached, her skin felt raw, her eyelids were heavy from the hysterical sobbing she'd done, and her throat was throbbing from screaming so much.

Shaking her head, Belle kept going, her boots and socks waterlogged at well, and she'd just pressed down on the nozzle of the hair spray, while flicking the lighter on, when something launched out of the tunnel she was passing, right at her.

Screaming, she dropped the two items in her hand, as her attention shifted onto what was attacking her, and her eyes widened when she found her arm in the grasp of what looked to be an extremely decomposed, rotting Betty Ripsom, the very girl who'd gone missing weeks ago, before she'd even returned to town, and her teeth weren't normal. They were jagged and sharp, and they were glistening with blood, which also soaked her clothing.

She had both of her hands clamped around Belle's wrist and elbow, and, to the young woman's horror, was attempting to actually bite her, snarling in effort, and hunger.

"Belle," came a whisper, distracting her long enough to see a few more child or young adult sized figures making their way toward where she stood, struggling against the dead girl's grasp, from the dark tunnel Betty had appeared from. "Belle, you found us."

Betty was continuing to try to chomp on her arm, but Belle kept attempting to yank it from her grasp, and soon lifted one of her feet, placing it flat against the girl's chest, then using it to swiftly kick her away, which freed her limb.

Swooping down, she scooped up the lighter and hair spray, then took off running, the sound of her splashing through the water echoing off the tunnel walls, and she was suddenly deafened by the sound of laughter. Not the laughter of children, as she was used to, but that of a maniacal Clown.

Belle prepared the lighter and the hair spray, then spun around, pressing down on the nuzzle, and the fire illuminated the monster's tall, bloody form, before she found one of his large white gloved hands clasped around her throat.

It laughed once more, as It effortlessly lifted her up off of her feet, then tossed her aside, against the wall, like a rag doll.

Belle grunted, as she hit her back and her head hit the stone structure, before collapsing into the water, and, when she looked up, the Clown was gone.

Grabbing up the items that were both her light source and her only protection, she ran off as fast as she could. Its hold on her was becoming weaker. She could tell. Even though Its attacks seemed to be becoming more deadly, it was actually a sign that she was losing her fear, or that her determination to get to Patrick was stronger than how terrified she was, as It had gone from Its horrifying attack of bugs, spiders, and snakes, to the sudden launch of Betty Ripsom, and now simply grabbing her.

Rushing into a tunnel, Belle leaned against the wall, and closed her eyes. She began to do something she'd learned to control her panic attacks. She blocked it all out. Everything. The sounds of the Clown, the darkness, the smell of the sewers, the feeling of being soaked in

the disgusting water, the aches of her bones, the raw feeling of her skin, the heaviness of her clothes, her fear. She let it all go. She pushed it aside, as she took in one deep breath after another. Inhaling through her mouth, then exhaling via her nose. All while repeating in her mind, "It's not real." Over and over again, like a prayer.

Opening her eyes, the sewers had gone silent. There was no maniacal laughter, there were no approaching footsteps. In fact, the only thing she could hear was the water dripping from the ceiling. But that was normal. It was normal, it was not the Clown.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Belle closed her eyes once more, taking a few seconds to compose herself, before she heard it, a new sound, but one that was just as real as the water dripping.

It was a splash. A rather large splash. And it was loud. It was nearby. Followed by what sounded like a metal scraping stone.

Pushing off from the wall, Belle jumped out from the tunnel, and took a left, running as fast as she could, until she came around a corner, where the sight before her caused her to skid to a halt.

The Clown stood there, several feet away from her. Its back was to her, and, beyond It, she could see him. She could see Patrick.

He was standing with his back to a grate covered hole in the wall, holding what looked like a metal pipe up as though a baseball bat. His face was covered in blood, as was his t-shirt, and he, like her, was soaking wet with the sewage water.

It was like the Clown's attack on him had been taking place at the same time Its had been taking place on her. Had that even been Patrick that grabbed her ankle? Was that even him in the photo she accidentally took?

Aside from being soaking wet, he was currently a mirror image of what she'd seen, but there was no way he'd been wandering around, injured, all this time, while It had focused on Belle.

The ankle grab, the photo, had it all been the Clown? Luring her into the sewers to save Patrick, at the same time he was luring the young

man himself in?

A sudden popping sound snapped Belle from her thoughts, and she heard Patrick scream.

"Leave him alone!" Belle screamed, her voice coming out almost animalistic or demonic, as it was fueled by her rage toward the Clown and her protectiveness over Patrick, while she lifted up the lighter and hair spray, then pressed down on the nozzle.

The flame that shot out reached the back of the Clown, and It shrieked in pain, spinning around, though she never saw Its legs move, only Its waist, to glare at her with glowing yellow eyes, then It was gone, just as the last of the hair spray ran out.

Breathing heavily, Belle looked around, as though waiting to see if It would pop out at her again, but It didn't, and, when she looked back to where It'd been standing, she saw Patrick collapsed on the ground, propped up slightly against the sloped wall.

"Oh, my gosh," Belle breathed, rushing toward him, while she tucked the lighter and empty can into her one back pocket, her other still containing her dead phone. "Patrick."

Falling to her knees beside him, she reached out for him. She wanted to touch his face, but it was so bloody, and she had no idea where the initial wounds were, so her hands fell on his neck, his shoulders, his upper chest, any part of him she could find.

"Baby?" she said, gazing at him with vision that was soon becoming blurred, as her rich dark chocolate eyes filled with tears. "Baby, can you hear me? Patrick?"

He emitted a soft moan, as his eyelids, which looked as heavy as Belle's felt, fluttered, before opening, and he gazed up at her with his blue orbs. "Belle?"

Choking out a sob of relief, a bright smile alighting her beautiful, albeit dirty and wet, face, she nodded, risking moving her hands up to his face, which she gently touched, mindful of any hidden wounds, and not caring that his warm, thick blood got on her. "Yes. Yes, it's

me. You're all right. I've got you. You're safe. It's okay now."

Patrick lifted his arms, which felt like they were being weighed down by hundred pound weights you'd find at a gym, but he didn't care, and reached for her, doing as she did, in that he grabbed at any part of her he could find, but he soon managed to get his lean limbs around her, where he held onto her like a life jacket, burying his bloody face into her shoulder.

"Shh," Belle soothed, wrapping one of her slender arms around his shoulders, while the other lifted to cup the back of his soaking wet wavy raven hued head, and her heart broke in a way she didn't know it could, when she actually heard him start to sob against her, a sound that caused her to instinctively tighten her hold on him. "Shh. It's all right, love. It's all right. You're safe now. You're safe. I've got you. I've got you."

Leaning down, she buried her nose in his hair, pressing a kiss there, before simply embracing him, as a tidalwave of relief, joy, and love flooded absolutely every last inch of not only her, but Patrick as well, while he soaked in her warmth; both that that came off of her skin, despite what it'd been through, and that which was given by her sheer presence; the softness of her body, the smell of her; which, again, despite being in the sewers, was still sweet and comforting; and simply being held in her arms again, after the single most terrifying experience of his life.

Unbeknownst to the two of them, they were being watched, by the Clown. It had peaked out from the tunnel It'd disappeared down, and was observing the two in fascination. It was something It had never seen before. Love, companionship, between two people. It'd had a brief experience with it, when It'd taken Georgie from Belle's arms, but what It was seeing now was something else entirely. The bond the pair had was a weakness to It, one It couldn't break, one It couldn't even get in the middle of. But It'd defiantly try.

Pulling back after a moment, Patrick lifted his gaze to Belle's beautiful, beloved above all faces, and saw the dirt on it. He raised a hand, cupping a side of it, as his eyes scanned the area, before lowering to the rest of his body, and his limbs soon followed his gaze, his brow furrowing, as he spotted the tiny bite marks on her body,

the cuts and bruises marring her beautiful milky white skin, the angry raw red marks on the backs of her arms.

"Baby, what happened?" he asked in an almost growl, as he lifted his eyes back to hers, and she could've cried in joy at the sight and sound of the infamous protective and possessiveness he'd held over her when they were dating. "Are you okay? Did that fucker hurt you? Did the others hurt you? I'll kill them all!"

Here he was, just having his had first encounter with the thing that'd been haunting her day and night for the past eight months, after literally tearing her little brother from her arms, covered in his own blood, from still unseen wounds on his face, and he was worried about her. But she understood that, as, despite every part of her aching, all she could think about was him.

"No, I'm not okay," Belle said, even as she realized Patrick was thinking of the Clown as a person, something she naturally did to, at first, and his words about the 'others' made her think of Betty Ripsom and the shadows of more people she'd seen and heard. He must've encountered them as well. "And neither are you. Which is why we need to get out of here. Come on."

Getting to her feet, she moved her hands to his arms, and helped him get up. He stumbled slightly, but she managed to hold onto him, as he got his footing.

Before they could do or say anything more, an, unfortunately, becoming familiar sound pierced the air of the sewers. That of the maniacal laugh of the Clown.

"What the fuck is that?" Patrick asked, even as his hands tightened where they held her arms, not out of his fear, but out of his aforementioned protectiveness of her.

"It's coming back," Belle breathed in realization. It was going to make one last attempt on them, and she knew It was pissed. "We've got to go. Now! Run!"

The two took off, just as the laughter melted into that of children, and the sounds of more than one person approaching through the

sewer water hit them.

Patrick grabbed Belle's hand as they ran, ducking into the nearest tunnel, before rushing forward. They had no idea where they were going, but they had to get away from It, and they were not losing each other again, hence why their grip on one another's limbs were defiantly going to leave them with bruises.

The two stumbled their fair share of times, but whatever It was coming after them as, whether a Clown, or Betty Ripsom and the others, It always sounded like it was just behind them. They had no time to stop, no time to pause, to even catch their breath, they just had to go.

Turning a corner, the pair came face to face with the decomposing Betty Ripsom, who had at least half a dozen other rotting children with her, and Belle gasped sharply, an action that tore seemingly tore a fresh wound in her already raw throat, at not only the sight of them, but when she suddenly found herself being shoved behind Patrick, who did so out of his protectiveness of her. Despite him being the more wounded one, *she* was his main concern, and he'd put his body between her and *anything* that tried to hurt her.

Taking up her hand once more, Patrick turned them around, and back out of the tunnel they'd just entered, where the pair bolted away from the hord of dead.

Bugs were falling from the ceiling, spiders crawled along the walls, they could feel their legs hitting snakes in the water, and, every time they passed a tunnel, they'd catch a glimpse of rotting flesh, glistening blood, and sharp teeth, or the tall, mostly white form of the Clown.

They kept going. They didn't stop. They didn't let go of each other. It was like a war zone in the sewers, and everything was crumbling apart as they fled the final battle. Having no idea that this was truly only the beginning of their fight with It.

After what, again, felt like hours, of them running, of them stumbling, of them holding and leaning onto each other, Belle and Patrick turned a corner, and there it was. The entrance to the sewer

that both had unknowingly gone into for different reasons.

They could hear It still, It remained right behind them, directly on their heels, and they pushed forward, making it the last few feet. Then they were outside.

Emerging into the bright afternoon Summer sunshine, their eyes instinctively closed against the sudden light, and their strength gave out. The two collapsed on the shoreline of the stream, into the somewhat cleaner water of the rocky babbling brook.

Looking over, they heard the last echoing remains of the Clown's sinister laughter, and then It was gone. The branches hanging over the sewer entrance swayed a bit from Belle and Patrick plowing through them, but, aside from that, and their current physical appearances, there was nothing. No sight or sound to show what they'd just been through.

Both were breathing heavily, their chests rising and falling far too quickly, but they didn't care. They'd made it. Together, they'd survived, and they'd made it out.

Belle and Patrick, both now sitting in the shallow water of the river, which was cool and refreshing against what of their dirty, tired, aching forms it touched, looked over at one another, and, in perfect sync, reached for each other.

Their arms wound around the other's body, Belle's slipping beneath Patrick's, and wrapping about his lean muscled torso, while his secured around her slender shoulders, hands splaying and clutching at her back, as well as her endless chocolate tresses, as they attempted to catch their breath, and, at the same time, not being willing to part.

They both flicked one last look at the sewer entrance, before focusing completely on the other, Belle gripping the wet, dirty material of the back of his yellow Tom of Tom & Jerry t-shirt, while Patrick soon turned his head to press a kiss to her forehead, neither caring his blood, most of which was now sticky, as it was drying, got on her as he did so, before the two simply held each other, recovering from the events of what had, in reality, only been a few minutes.

Belle couldn't help but smile. Even though she was once more covered in the blood of someone she loved, this time, they hadn't been taken from her. They were safe, and she had them. She'd won the latest battle against the Clown.

But, at the same time, she knew it wasn't a complete victory. She'd taken someone from It, she'd shown It she was more than willing to fight, and she realized that meant It was going to be pissed.

- Author's Note - Well, there you go! I hope you guys enjoyed it! I was really nervous writing the whole bit in the sewers, but I hope it came out well!

I wrote a scene between Belle and Mike, it wasn't very long, but I decided to cut it, as it felt kind of repetitive, especially after Belle had already met Ben, then reunited with Beverly. But, don't worry, Belle will see Mike soon!

Also, if you'd like me to add new stuff to my Profile, such as the clothing Belle wears, even her backpack, her camera/camera equipment, her gun, etc., let me know!

Again, I really hope you guys enjoyed the Chapter, and PLEASE keep sending in those awesome reviews! They truly mean so much to me!

5. Bruised & Bloodied

- Author's Note - Hello, lovelies! I'm sure I'm starting to sound like a broken record, but I seriously can't thank each and every one of you enough for all of the incredible support you show with every Chapter!

A huge extra special thanks to **spiritgirl16**, **chelsnichole12**,
HermioneandMarcus, **Nirvana14**,
SpellSlaughterWithoutLaughter, **DaughterofJerusalem**,
LoveFiction2017, **Winchestergirl123**, and **Rosebud on Royal Icing**
for reviewing!

I also want to give another shoutout to **DaughterofJerusalem** for sending in what has to be my absolute **FAVORITE** review so far! I must've read it a dozen times. Thank you **so, so** much! I really hope you continue to send in amazing reviews like that!

One last thing, I changed the Cover Image to a new picture of Sarah, because she's too beautiful for me to just use the one, and I also added a short video of her to my Profile, from a recent post she made, so you guys can hear her voice, if you'd like.

With that, here's the next Chapter.

I hope you all still enjoy it, and, as always, please don't forget to review!

Upon arriving at the hospital, Patrick, being the more obviously wounded, not to mentioned bloodied, one, was immediately loaded onto a gurney, and wheeled away by staff members, though that didn't stop he and Belle from continuing to hold hands, which they managed to maintain, up until the last possible second, then all she was able to do was stand there, watching, as he was taken off to be treated, lifting his head in order to look back at her, before he couldn't any more, when he was wheeled through a pair of heavy double doors, which swung shut behind he, the Nurses, and the E.R. Doctor with him.

Belle felt so cold, though not just because she was still wet from the sewer water, and alone, even while in the center of Derry's hospital, of which the town only had the one, now that she was without Patrick, though his blood still stained her clothing and skin.

"Come on, sweetheart," came the voice of Nora, a pretty blond Nurse in her late 20s, as she walked up beside the teenager, and lifted one limb to wrap around her slender form, while the other came to rest gently her nearest forearm. "We need to have a look at you too."

Belle merely nodded, finally able to tear her gaze off of where she'd last had a glimpse of Patrick, then turn, and allow the woman to lead her to a room.

Belle sat, still in her bloody, dirty, and wet clothing, on the side of a hospital bed, while Nora took her vitals, currently checking her blood pressure, when the door opened, and another familiar face entered.

"I heard Belle Denbrough was here," said Dr. Cullen, a handsome young Doctor, probably in his late 30s, at the most, whom she'd known most of her life, smiling, as he walked toward where she sat. "How's she looking, Nora?"

"Temp's 97.8, pulse is 80, B.P.'s 100 over 80," replied the Nurse, while the sound of tearing velcro filled the room, when she removed the cuff from Belle's slender upper arm. "All normal."

"Good," answered Dr. Cullen, picking up the medical chart Nora had been putting together for her as she took her primary stats, and looking through it. "So, Belle, do you want to tell us what happened to you and Mr. Hockstetter?"

"Bear," Belle quickly lied, figuring it made the most sense, at least as far as explaining her and Patrick's injuries, especially because, if her thoughts were correct, the lacerations on the latter's face were most likely from the rotting Betty Rimpson literally taking a bite out of him, as she'd attempted to do with her arm. "It was a bear."

"A bear, huh?" Dr. Cullen inquired, finishing up with the medical chart, and handing it to Nora to update, while he reached into the

front pocket of his white lab coat, for the small flashlight he kept there. "Can't remember the last time I saw a bear here in Derry. Where'd you two stumble across this bear? Look here."

He clicked on the flashlight, holding it up with one hand, while lifting his other, a single finger extended toward the ceiling on the limb, as he aimed the small light at Belle's right chocolate brown orb.

"In the woods," Belle continued, doing as the Doctor said, and looking at the light, which he soon moved to her left eye, switching tasks with his hands. "I was out taking photos by the river, and I heard a scream. That's when I saw Patrick, struggling with the bear."

"I see," Dr. Cullen went on, soon lowering the flashlight, then clicking it off, tucking it back into his pocket, before retrieving her medical chart from the Nurse once more. "And what was Mr. Hockstetter doing out in the woods?"

"I don't know," responded Belle, which was the truth, she had no idea why Patrick had been where he was.

"You may experience some Post Traumatic Stress, or disorientation, but your vitals look good. No signs of any head trauma," spoke Dr. Cullen, before offering her a soft smile. "I'd say you and Mr. Hockstetter were very lucky."

"When can I see him?" Belle asked, while the Doctor began to update her chart with the pen Nora had left attached to it.

"I'm not sure," answered Dr. Cullen, his brow furrowing. "Probably not anytime soon. I was called down so that the E.R. Doctor could tend to him." Looking up at Nora, he went on. "Have their parents been notified?"

"Yes, Doctor," she replied. "They're on their way."

Belle immediately felt her heart sink. Not only didn't she want to deal with Patrick's Mom and Dad; though it'd probably just be the former, as the latter was most likely at work. He was an attorney, while she was a stereotypical Housewife, though she'd occasionally help at her husband's office if his Secretary was out; but she was loathing seeing

her own, since she hadn't even been back in Derry 24 hours yet, and was already in the hospital.

"Good," Dr. Cullen said, offering the Nurse back the chart with a smile, which he soon turned on Belle. "Well, Ms. Denbrough, you were quite lucky today. Nora's going to get you a change of clothes, and you can use the shower to clean up, while you wait for your parents." He gestured at the room's bathroom, then reached out to lay his hand on her nearest shoulder. "I'm going to give you something for any pain, but let me know if anything really starts to bother you."

"Thank you, Dr. Cullen," responded Belle, giving him the strongest smile of gratitude she could muster, and he patted her arm, before turning, then leaving the room.

Belle got the best shower possible in the hospital bathroom. She hated the smells of the soaps, both for her skin and for her hair, but anything was better than continuing to carry the scent of the sewers.

Nora had thankfully brought her a hair dryer, which they didn't keep in the rooms all the time, just in case someone came in that might use it to try and hurt themselves, or were elderly, and therefore the item was a safety hazard, and she was able to, for the most part, dry her long, long hair, then brush it with the pitiful comb the Nurse also gave her, before she gave up, and threw it into a ponytail, dressing in the hospital attire she found stacked and folded on the bed next.

After putting on the white t-shirt, blue pajama-like pants, and plain tennis shoes, Belle put her soiled clothes into the plastic bag left for them, as well as her dead phone, but she tucked the empty can of hair spray and Patrick's lighter into her backpack, then set both satchels on a chair, before stepping out into the hallway to look around.

"Belle!" came an exasperated, but relief filled voice, and she spun around to see Angela, Patrick's Mom, coming toward her, arms already extended to her.

"Hi, Mrs. Hockstetter," Belle greeted the woman with a soft smile, before biting back her slight flinch of pain, when the woman reached

out, and pulled her into a tight embrace.

"Thank God you're safe," said Angela, rubbing the teenager's slender back and endless chocolate tresses with her one hand, while the other merely locked into place around her tiny waist.

"I'm all right, Mrs. Hockstetter," Belle reassured, lifting her slender limbs to hug the older woman back.

Patrick's Mom laughed softly, as she pulled away just enough to look into the teenager's beautiful face, her hands coming to rest on her upper arms. "All this time, and you still won't call me 'Angela'."

Belle smiled sweetly at her words, her own small cut covered limbs gently grasping the older woman's elbows, while the two stood there in the hallway.

"How is he?" Angela asked, her expression suddenly serious, while she spoke of her son.

"I don't know," Belle answered honestly, with a shrug of her slender shoulders. "There was a lot of blood, but that happens with facial lacerations. I don't think they're anything serious."

Angela couldn't help but laugh softly once more, as she moved her hands, one lowering from the teenager's arm, while the other gently took up her own limb, then used it to lead her over to a nearby sitting area. "Listen to our future Doctor."

Belle smiled sweetly again, taking a seat next to Patrick's Mother, when they reached the nearest couch, where the older woman immediately drew the hand of hers that she held into her lap, while emitting a sad sigh.

"I was so scared when I got the call from the hospital, Belle," Angela spoke after a moment of silence passed between the two, before she gently shook her head. "With all of the kids going missing lately. . . " She choked out what sounded like a pain filled chuckle, shrugging her shoulders, even while Belle could tell she was holding back tears. "All I could think was that my baby had been next."

Belle remained quiet, thinking how Patrick *had* almost been next,

while she lowered her gaze from his Mom, slowly licking her lips, but she was thankfully saved from having to respond, when the woman continued.

"I already lost one son," Angela said, flicking a glance over at the teenager, then shaking her head once more. "I can't lose the other."

Belle's dark brow furrowed in confusion. What was she talking about? Patrick was an only child, as far as she knew.

"Wh-What do you mean, Mrs. Hockstetter?" inquired Belle, turning a bit on the couch so that she could better face the woman. "I thought Patrick was an only child."

"He never told you?" Angela asked, her brow furrowing, while she met Belle's questioning gaze with her own. "He never told you about Avery?"

Belle shook her endlessly long rich dark chocolate hued tressed head. She truthfully had no idea what or whom Patrick's Mom was talking about. "No."

"Oh, well, you know how he is," Angela went on, lifting her other hand to rest it overtop the one of Belle's she already held in her lap. "Keeps it all hidden, just like his Father. Avery was. . ." Pausing, she took in a deep breath, then continued. "Avery was my other baby boy. He was born when Patrick was about five, I think."

"What happened to him?" Belle said, giving her head another slight shake, even though it was quite obvious what would've happened to the child, since he was no longer around, and she had never heard of him.

"He died, when he was still really little," explained Angela, offering the beautiful teenager a sad, soft little smile, her eyes now very obviously glistening with tears. "Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Poor thing just. . . stopped breathing. I went to check on him, since he never slept through the night, and. . . And there he was." Her brow furrowed, while her gaze took on an almost far away look, as though she wasn't looking at anything in particular, simply lost in her thoughts. "He was so little."

Belle's heart broke at Patrick's Mom's words, and she lifted her other hand to rest atop their already combined limbs on the woman's thighs. "I'm so sorry, Mrs. Hockstetter. I had no idea. Patrick's never said a word about Avery to me."

"Well, like I said, sweetheart," Angela spoke, offering the beautiful teenager who'd captured her son's heart at such a young age a fresh smile. "He's never been an emotional boy. Men aren't exactly know for showing their feelings." She shrugged, as she went on. "My son just takes it to the next level."

Belle offered her a soft smile. She was defiantly right about Patrick. To everybody else, he came off as a cold, unfeeling person, who only enjoyed tormenting others, and, sure, that was, for the most part, true, but she also knew there was so much more underneath, and she seemed to be the only one who'd ever gotten through to it.

"Mrs. Hockstetter?" came a voice several feet from where they sat, and both women looked up to see the E.R. Doctor standing nearby.

"Oh! Y-Yes, that's me," said Angela, lifting a hand to wipe away her tears, before she got to her feet, and walked over to the man.

Belle soon stood up as well, gazing after Patrick's Mom and the Doctor, wishing she could hear what they were saying, but she soon had something else to focus on, when she heard her name being exclaimed from behind her, causing her to turn to see her parents rushing toward her, looking both relieved and terrified.

"Here we go," Belle muttered to herself, before she moved forward to meet them, soon enveloped in Katherine's arms, while Bryan stepped in to hug both of them, as he had at the airport, lifting a hand to lovingly cradle the back of his daughter's head, as his wife cried softly in joy.

"Are you okay?" Katherine asked, pulling back after a moment to lift her watery gaze to her baby girl's beautiful face, which seemed to be the only part of her that could be seen that wasn't unmarked by what had happened, and she took a mental inventory of her injuries of small cuts, bruises, and the angry red marks on the backs of her arms, while making a note that there could be more beneath her clothes,

which there were. Her back was bruised and she had a nice lump growing on the rear of her head from where the Clown had tossed her like a rag doll into the sewer wall.

"I'm okay, Mom," Belle reassured her, offering both she and her Dad a soft smile. "I'm okay. I promise."

Choking out a sob of relief, Katherine pulled her back into her arms, while Bryan leaned in, and pressed a kiss to her forehead, before he noticed Patrick's Mom parting ways with the E.R. Doctor, then walking toward them.

"Angela," Bryan greeted, moving around his wife and daughter, in order place a large, comforting hand on the woman's shoulder, when she arrived just a few feet from where they stood.

"Hi, Bryan," Angela replied with a soft smile, before Belle and Katherine parted, and the latter moved to embrace her friend.

"We're so sorry, Angela," spoke Katherine, while Belle moved closer to the three adults, her heart thudding against the inside of her chest, as she anxiously waited for Patrick's Mom to tell them how he was doing.

"Thank you," Angela said, hugging Kat in return, before offering both her and Bryan a fresh gentle grin, when the two women pulled away from each other.

"How is he?" Belle asked. She normally wouldn't be rude, but she couldn't wait any longer, go through any more pleasantries, to find out if Patrick was all right.

"He's going to be fine," answered Angela, sending the beautiful teenager, whom she truthfully saw as the daughter she never had, a smile, and Belle felt like she could have collapsed to the floor in relief. "All that blood, and the cuts on his face didn't even require stitches. But they want to keep him overnight, just in case."

"Of course," Bryan said, as he gently rubbed the woman's back.

"We're so glad he's okay," spoke Katherine, while she held her friend's hands with her own.

"Can we see him?" Belle once more interjected. Again, she normally wouldn't be what was seen as inconsiderate, but she'd had enough of this.

"Not yet, sweetie," replied Angela, brushing past Bryan and Katherine, in order to approach their daughter, who's slender arms she lifted her hands to. "They've got him sedated right now, to help with the pain, and so that he can get some rest."

"Well, then, I want to stay," Belle went on, looking up at her parents, when they too came over to stand with her.

"Sweetheart, Patrick's going to out of it until at least morning," Bryan responded.

"Beside, you need your own rest," said Katherine, lifting a hand to gently rubbing her daughter's slender back through the endless veil of lush chocolate hued tresses.

"I can rest plenty here," Belle went on. "It *is* a hospital, after all." Gazing firmly at all three parents, she continued once more. "I want to be with him."

"And I know he'd want you with him too, honey," Angela replied, moving her hands down the beautiful teenager's arms in order to grasp her slender, cut marred ones. "But your Mom's right. You need your own rest, and there's nowhere better to do that than your home."

Sighing softly, Belle gently pulled one of her hands free of Patrick's Mom's, in order to rub her own face with it. She knew this was a battle she wasn't going to win, since, not only was she too tired to fight it any longer, but she realized she couldn't spend the night away from Bill, especially if he'd already learned what had happened.

"Fine," Belle said, lowering her hand in favor of gazing firmly at the three adults again. "But I'm coming back first thing in the morning."

"Of course, baby," Katherine replied, continuing to rub her daughter's back.

"Let's get you home," Bryan added on, and Belle nodded in reluctant

agreement.

"I'm going to get a shower, and put on my own clothes," Belle said to her parents, as they stood in the foyer of their house, Bryan just then closing and locking the front door behind them.

"Okay, baby," replied Katherine, offering her daughter a soft smile, before she indicated the hospital bag of Belle's dirty clothing she carried, while Bryan had her backpack. "I'll put these in the wash, and, if you can survive a night without a phone, we'll go tomorrow to get you a new one."

"But, if you want to text the girls, and let them know you're okay," Bryan spoke, reaching into his back pocket for his own phone, which he handed to Belle, along with a smile of his own. "You can use mine."

"Thanks, Dad," Belle responded, taking the item from him, before all three of their gazes turned to the stairs, as they suddenly heard movement coming down them, and her heart ached when she saw Bill.

"Belle!" he exclaimed, all but throwing himself off of the last few steps, then at her, locking his arms around her slender waist, and burying his face in her chest.

"I'm all right, love," Belle said, wrapping both slender limbs tightly about him in return, while bowing her head to press a kiss to the top of his. "I promise."

"You-You've got to s-s-s-stop doing this," replied Bill, pulling back after a few seconds in order to look up at her, smiling softly, an action she returned, as she moved a hand to cup one side of his handsome little face.

Belle's attention was drawn from her little brother, when she caught sight of something at the top of the staircase, and she looked up to see Ben standing there.

"New kid?" Belle asked affectionately, even in her confusion at him being here.

"Hey, Belle!" Ben called to her, waving, before he started down the steps, his adorable chubby face etched with concern. "Are you okay?"

"Yes, I'm fine," Belle answered, laughing softly, while she reached out to touch his shoulder, when he arrived in the foyer. "What are you doing here? I make that much of a first impression?"

Ben blushed, but didn't have time to explain himself, as Katherine took over, while Bryan headed upstairs with his daughter's backpack.

"Ben's staying over tonight," she said, smiling sweetly at her son's new friend. "Is that okay with you, honey?"

"Of course," Belle replied, smiling in return at her Mom, who nodded, then began down the hall to the kitchen, which, of course, had the door to the basement in it, where the washer and dryer were located, and she waited until she was gone, in order to continue. "So, is that all the explanation I get?"

"Eddie, R-R-Richie, S-Stan, and I met him today," Bill spoke. "When we were at the B-B-B-Barrens."

"That's an odd place to run into someone," Belle answered, even though it *was* where she'd been when she'd sort of come across Patrick, but she let it go for now, despite it being obvious there was more to the story. "Well, I'm going to get a shower, so you boys behave for a bit, okay?"

Ben and Bill both nodded, and she sent them smiles, lifting her cut and bruise marred hands to touch their faces, before she leaned down, pressing a kiss to their foreheads, then brushing past them to head upstairs.

After her shower, during which the sun had finally set, Belle tossed the hospital attire into the laundry, then headed to her room. She felt a hundred times better, now having had a proper shower, followed by being able to correctly and fully dry, then brush, her hair, which resumed its usual lushly curled state.

She put on a fresh black bra and panties set, then used her Dad's

phone to quickly send Bonnie, Caroline, and Emma a group text, letting them know what had happened; or, rather, her version of it, the bear version; that she was okay, but that her phone hadn't survived the attack, so she'd talk to them tomorrow when she got her new one, before heading to her dresser to pick out something to wear for the night, spotting her backpack hanging off of her desk chair, as she did so.

Opening the second drawer on the left, where she kept her slumber attire, Belle began absently picking through the items, until she caught sight of something at the very bottom, a piece of clothing that was mostly red.

Pulling it free, she instantly recognized the item. It was a long sleeve, button down, red plaid shirt that belonged to Patrick. It was still there from back when they'd been dating, and she'd loved borrowing his clothes to wear, especially to sleep in.

Smiling softly, Belle mimicked her actions with Georgie's baby blanket the night before, and lifted the item to her beautiful face, bowing her head a bit to bury her nose in the material, which she took in a deep breath of. It still smelled like Patrick.

Lowering the shirt, she shook it out, then put it on, and was just finishing up doing the buttons, when there was a knock on her bedroom door, which she now realized she'd left completely open.

Looking over, Belle smiled at the sight of Ben in her doorway. "Hey there, new kid." Pulling her endless chocolate curls free of the collar of Patrick's red plaid shirt, she continued over to her bed, then sat down on its edge, facing the adorable boy. "What's up?"

"I just wanted to make sure you really are okay," Ben replied with a shrug, as he took a step into her room, while Belle grabbed her Dad's phone from where she had tossed it on her mattress, then placed it on her nightstand.

"Yes, I'm really okay, love," reassured Belle, before giving her slender form a gentle stretch. "I'm just a bit sore. So, I can't wait to see how I feel in the morning."

"Good," Ben said, after smiling softly at her actions.

"So, are you going to tell me how you went from spending most of your time in the library to sleeping over at my house with the brother you said you weren't friends with?" Belle asked, quirked a finely sculpted dark brow over at the boy.

"I don't think I should tell you," replied Ben, looking away from her beautiful face, and instead gazing at the floor of her bedroom.

"And it's because of that reason that I know you should," Belle said, getting to her feet, then walking over to where the boy stood, in order to reach behind him, where she closed her door, before moving back to her bed, which she patted, as she sat down on it once more. "Come on, love."

Ben sighed, but padded over to her. He too was already in his PJs of a dark grey t-shirt, navy blue sweatpants, and white socks.

"Okay," he said, sitting down beside her on the bed. "But you have to promise not to tell. I don't want anyone to get in trouble."

Belle slowly nodded, not sure why anyone would get in trouble, but agreeing to keep it between them nonetheless. "I promise."

"Well, when I left the Library, Henry Bowers and the others were waiting for me," Ben began, his first sentence alone causing her heart to drop into the pit of her stomach.

"Oh, my gosh," Belle breathed, lifting a slender hand to touch a side of her beautiful face, before she extended the limb to him, gently brushing his chubby cheek with her delicate fingers. She knew Patrick had been one of the others. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine," Ben reassured her, unable to help the feeling of warmth that began to seep through him, beginning from where her fingers touched his face, it was such a loving, Motherly touch, even though they'd only met hours before.

"What did they do to you?" Belle asked, as she dropped her hand back down into her lap.

"They took me to this place called the Kissing Bridge," Ben went on, and his words made her eyes slip closed, while a gentle sigh escaped past her lips, before he shrugged his shoulders. "At first, they were mostly making fun of how I'm fat."

Opening her eyes, Belle moved her hand to gently rest on where Ben's was on the bed, giving it an encouraging stroke with her delicate thumb, while she also offered him a soft, sweet smile, even while, inside, she was being overwhelmed with a myriad of emotions, mainly anger towards Henry and the others, sadness for Ben, and regret and guilt at herself, for not staying with the boy, and protecting him, despite knowing she couldn't have predicted what would happen, and that if she'd seen any sign of Henry and the others when she herself left the Library, she would've either confronted them, or gone straight back inside to Ben.

"Then what happened, love?" Belle asked, offering him the strongest reassuring smile she could muster. She was still so exhausted from the day's events, but she had to be strong for Ben.

"Then. . . Henry got involved," said Ben, taking great comfort in her soothing presence. He'd put on a brave face for Bill, Eddie, Richie, and Stanley, mainly because he didn't want to look like a wimp in front of the boys he wanted to be friends with, but he knew he didn't have to do so with Belle. However, part of him still wanted to. "He punched me a couple of times, in the nose."

"Ooh, that must've hurt," Belle spoke her, her brow furrowing, as she moved her free hand to delicately brush the aforementioned body part with the backs of her fingers. "When Georgie was a baby, just learning how to sit up without help, he hit me in the face with one of his toys. I know he didn't mean it, but it was still *so* painful."

"Yeah, it is pretty sore," Ben agreed, before sending her an adorable sheepish smile. "I really hope I don't have to sneeze for a few days."

Belle laughed softly, then nodded. "Yes, I unfortunately did, and I swear it set back my recovery every time, 'cause Georgie had to hit me during pollon season." Smiling sweetly, she gave his hand a renewed rub, while her other limb returned her lap. "Go on, love."

"He started talking about the Kissing Bridge," continued Ben. "How it stood for two things: sucking face." Belle couldn't help but roll her eyes at that. "And. . . carving names. That's when he got out his knife."

Belle's brow, which had begun to furrow, not in confusion though, but out of disbelief and growing horror, smoothed out, when he gently pulled his hand free from beneath hers, in order to reach for the hem of his t-shirt, which he pulled up a bit in order to reveal the bandage covering a good portion of the right side of his stomach.

"Oh, my gosh!" she exclaimed in shock, leaning down, then forward, in order to get a better look at the area. "What did that Monster do to you?"

"He started carving his name," Ben said, causing Belle to flick her pain filled eyes up onto his face from her hunched over position. "But he only got the 'H' done, before the others tried to stop him. I took a chance, and kicked him away. He fell, but so did I, back over the railing, then down the hill. They came after me though."

Belle's eyes once more slipped closed. That explained the disturbed dirt, leaves, and such that she'd seen when she'd stopped to take photos at the Kissing Bridge. She'd been only a few moments behind the horrific scene, unknowingly following in the group's path.

"Oh, love," she said, after a moment, straightening up, in order to better meet his gaze with her own, which now held a questioning tone. "Is that how you met Bill and the others?"

"Yeah," replied Ben. "I stumbled upon them at the sewers. They took care of me." Shrugging, he went on. "I didn't really feel like going home, so Bill asked your parents if I could spend the night."

Sighing softly, Belle did the only thing she could think to do, and reached out, drawing him into her arms, where she held him against her soft, slender, warm, albiet currently aching and bruised, form, stroking his hair with one hand. "I'm so sorry, sweetie. I never should've left you."

"It's not your fault, Belle," Ben said, even as he lifted his arms to hug

her back. It felt so nice to be held so sweetly and so lovingly, especially by the girl who'd been more nice to him the few hours since they'd met, than most of the town had been in the months he's been here. "I knew they'd get me eventually."

"Well, you shouldn't have had to," sighed Belle, pressing a kiss to the top of his head, before she pulled back, moving one hand to cup a side of his face. "I'm glad you found the boys though." Her brow furrowing, she nodded at his bandaged stomach, which he'd since covered back up with his t-shirt. "Who did that?"

"Uh, Eddie," Ben replied, causing her to smile softly. Of course it'd been Eddie, who was practically a registered Nurse, especially with his all of his health concerns. "We went to the Pharmacy, and Beverly helped them get supplies for me."

"Beverly was there?" Belle said, even as she remembered the redhead saying, when she almost literally ran into her coming out of the coffee shop, that she'd been on her way to the drug store. "Did you give her the poem?"

"No," answered Ben, blushing softly, while she gazed at him with sparkling chocolate orbs. "It wasn't exactly the right time."

Belle nodded in understanding, continuing to stroke his cheek with her delicate thumb, before her brow furrowed afresh, as she gazed questioningly at him once more, this time the emotion was mixed with a bit of uncertainly. "Would you tell me one more thing about today?"

"Of course," Ben said, it now being his turn to wonder, while he looked into her beautiful face.

"Did Patrick do anything to you?" Belle asked, before sighing softly. "Aside from obviously being there."

"Which one's Patrick?" inquired Ben, it being his turn for his brows to knit together.

"Oh, sorry," Belle laughed sweetly. She kept forgetting he's only been here a few months, and therefor didn't know everyone like the back

of his hand, as she did. "He's, uh, tall, dark hair."

"Oh, okay," Ben replied in realization, before shaking his head. "No, he didn't do much. He held me back at first, then made a joke about lighting my hair on fire, but that was pretty much it. Why?" Pausing, he watched the relief spread across her gorgeous visage, though it was still obviously mixed with a bit of anger, then went on. "Is he your boyfriend?"

"No," answered Belle with a smile, then a shrug of her slender shoulders. "At least, not anymore. We broke up when he started tormenting sweethearts like you, my brother, and his friends." She touched his cheek again, her hand having dropped down when she'd asked about Patrick.

"But you still love him?" Ben asked, though the words were more of a statement, rather than a question, as it was obvious in the way she spoke of him, not to mention the expression on her beautiful face when she did so, that she did.

"To be honest, I wasn't sure," Belle admitted. "Not until today, at least. But, yes, now I know I do."

"Was he the one with you when the bear attacked?" inquired Ben, as realization dawned. He and Bill had been told she hadn't been alone, but weren't let in on who she'd been with.

"Yes," Belle replied, thankfully remembering her own lie about the animal attack story she'd come up with to cover what had really happened to she and Patrick, whom she now knew why he'd been in the sewers. He'd been looking for Ben.

"Is he gonna be okay?" Ben asked next, his brow furrowing, and Belle couldn't stop herself from smiling. He was actually asking if one of his tormentors was going to be all right. What a caring soul he was.

"Yes, sweet Ben," answered Belle, affectionately tucking some hair away from his forehead. "He's going to be just fine."

"That's good," Ben said, before quickly continuing. "I only care 'cause he's important to you, and. . . I care about you, Belle."

"I care about you too, love," Belle replied with a smile, leaning in to press a sweet little kiss to the top of his head, then pulling with a soft bubble of laughter. "So, is there anything else you want to tell me?"

The look that crossed Ben's face at those words caused her smile to immediately fade from her beautiful face, while her heart skipped a beat within her chest.

"Oh, love, what is it?" Belle asked, once more lifting a slender hand to stroke one of his chubby cheeks.

"Nothing," Ben replied, as he quickly pasted on what he hoped was a reassuring smile, but it was too late, she knew there was something else.

"Ben, whatever it is, you can tell me," Belle went on encouragingly and sweetly.

"There's nothing, Belle," answered Ben, continuing his vain attempts to prove his words to be true. "I promise."

"Okay," Belle responded, though she truly didn't believe it, but decided to drop the subject, at least for now. He'd already shared quite a lot with her, so, if he'd reached his limit, she would respect that, though she made a mental note about it in the back of her mind, to be inquired on again later.

After a surprisingly peaceful night; though she guessed it was due to the fact that, since she had been so mentally and physically exhausted from the events in the sewers, she hadn't needed her medication to sleep, and had passed out upon saying, "Goodnight" to Ben and Bill, then slumbered straight on until the sun rose; Belle couldn't get out of the house fast enough the following morning.

Belle humored her Mom by taking one of the pain pills that Dr. Cullen had prescribed her and, once Katherine left the room, satisfied, she didn't change out of Patrick's red plaid shirt, merely pulled on a pair of jeans, socks, and boots, then grabbed her keys, and headed downstairs to ask if she could take the Mini Cooper again, to which her Mom said, "Yes", though she added a plead for

her daughter to be careful.

Ben and Bill were sitting on the couch, still in their PJs, eating cereal, and watching TV, so she paused to give them both a kiss on the top of the head, telling them to be good, and that she'd see them later, before leaving the house.

Belle headed into town, first stopping to pick up and activate her new iPhone, which immediately blew up with a myriad of alerts, and she texted her friends to give them an update, before she did a bit of shopping, then headed to the hospital to see Patrick.

When she arrived, tucking her phone and keys into her pockets, she found the absolute last sight, aside from the Clown, that she wanted to see coming out of its entrance. That of Henry, accompanied by Belch and Victor.

"There she is," Henry immediately called out to her with a smirk, when he and his friends saw her approaching. "Nice job you did on our boy. I realize you missed him, but go easy next time he fucks you."

Belle didn't hesitate. She didn't say anything. She merely marched right up to Bowers, balled up one of her slender hands into a tight fist, then punched him, as hard as she could, in the jaw.

Henry grunted in pain, when her blow snapped his head clean sideways, while he stumbled slightly on his feet, and Belch and Victor came to a screeching halt on either side of him, though remained a few steps behind, as they stared in shock at the scene.

It hadn't even been his vial words about Patrick that set her off. When Belle saw him, all she could think about was Ben, and the horrible things Bowers had done to him. True, Belch, Patrick, and Victor had been there, but, as always, Henry had been the Ringleader, doing the worst acts of all of them.

"If you *ever* go near Ben Hanscom again, Henry, I swear to God it'll be the last thing you do in your pitiful excuse for a life," Belle said to him, her rich chocolate brown eyes ablaze with her protectiveness of the boy, and the fury she felt for what the one in front of her had

done to him.

Though stunned, his jaw throbbing, as it was now the second time in not even three days that he'd found himself on the receiving end of her anger, and he didn't even know a male who could hit as hard as she just had, Henry couldn't help but laugh, while he lifted a hand to rub the sore side of his mouth, straightening up, in order to look at her.

"Oh, is that what this is about?" he asked, a fresh smirk growing in strength on his face. "Momma Bear's taken in a new cub? Doubt you'll be able to pick him up the way you do the little Kaspbrak faggot. Hanscom's tits are bigger than yours, baby."

The air was filled with a sharp cracking sound, when Belle once more didn't give a second of hesitation, swiftly lifting the hand that was still curled into a perfect fist, the way her Dad, and her respective 'Uncle' in England, had taught her, and punching Henry again in the same spot.

He stumbled back a couple of feet this time, while Belch and Victor took voluntary steps away from their friend and the girl, still staring in disbelief. This defiantly wasn't the same one they knew from eight months ago, and, honestly, she was now even more attractive to them, having grown into a fighter, and one that would stand up to Henry Bowers, of all people.

"Stay away from him, Henry," Belle repeated firmly, watching as he pressed his fingers to his bottom lip, which was bleeding a bit from his teeth biting down on it under the force of the blow.

Bowers swiftly recovered, straightening up, then closing the distance between he and her, in a split second, but she held her ground, lifting her brown eyes to meet his own green ones, though, truthfully, he wasn't that much taller than her, just a few inches, when he got so close to her, the material of their shirts were touching.

"You're sure asking for it, sweetheart," Henry grinned at her, Belch and Victor continuing to look on, exchanging glances with one another every once and a while, as though making sure the other was seeing it too.

"Oh, ***please***, Henry, by all means, go for it," Belle replied, as a slight smile of her own began to tug at the corners of her lush pink lips. "Because if there's ***one*** way to ensure Patrick ***never*** has ***anything*** to do with you again, it's for you to hurt me."

Bowers' smirk faded, since he knew her words were completely true. No one had ever seen anyone more protective of another person than Patrick was of Belle. And, truthfully, the idea of an enraged Patrick coming after him gave Henry more chills that he'd ever admit to.

Her smile brightening, Belle brushed past Henry, then Belch and Victor, and began toward the entrance to the hospital.

"He liked it, you know," came Bowers' voice, as he and his two friends turned to follow her with their eyes, and Belle was just about to respond, naturally thinking he was talking about Ben, when he continued. "Patrick. He liked what I did to Tits. He got off on it."

Her brow furrowed, in both disbelief and disgust, while she came to a halt a few feet from the entrance doors, and shifted on her feet to look back at the three.

"And that's not all he likes," Henry continued, a wide smirk now etched across his face, as he used both of his hands to slowly upwardly massage his crotch.

Despite her confusion, as well as the urge to both throw up and march back over to punch him a third time, Belle merely gave her endlessly long lushly curled dark brown head a gentle shake. "Go to Hell, Henry."

"Belle," came a voice, and all four teenagers looked over to see James, Patrick's Father, there, having opened one of the hospital's front entrance's doors, which he still had a hand resting on, while he leaned outside, flicking his gaze from her to his son's three friends, then back, where he raised his other limb to gesture her forward. "Come on, sweetheart."

Belle flicked a last look at Henry, Belch, and Victor, then turned, and walked into the hospital, James moving his hand to her back to guide her, before he too gave the trio of boys a final glance, though his was

more of a glare, then closed the door behind her.

James, who currently wore one of his suits, placed his hands on his hips, as the two turned to face one another, pushing his unbuttoned dress jacket back so that he could do so, while he gazed down at the girl that, like his wife, he saw as the daughter he never had, and a bright smile lit up his handsome face, just before a gentle laugh slipped past his lips.

"It's good to see you, honey," he said, and Belle couldn't help but laugh softly herself in response, as she guessed he'd seen a fair amount of her encounter with Henry.

"It's good to see you too, Mr. Hockstetter," she replied, and the two exchanged another smile, with James lifting a hand to touch her slender shoulder, while they did so.

Author's Note - All right, guys, there's the new Chapter. I was going to make it longer, but thought Belle's encounter with Henry was a good stopping point. Also, it introduced Patrick's Dad, James, whom I've casted with Goran Visnjic, an actor most known for his role on 'E.R.', but I've added a picture of him to my Profile, in case you're unfamiliar with him, as well as a cap of Angela, Patrick's Mom, who's seen very briefly in the movie, hanging up Patrick's 'Missing' poster.

With that, I, again, hope you all enjoyed, and please don't forget to send in a review! Love you guys!

6. Leeches

- Author's Note - Hello, lovelies! I only have a couple of things to say before we get into the next Chapter.

One, thank you SO, SO much to **SpellSlaughterWithoutLaughter**, **MedievalWarriorPrincess**, **LoveFiction2017**, **Great story**, **Nirvana14** , and **Ahlysab** for reviewing!

Second, I can't help but notice that I seem to be hearing from less of you as we go on. I really hope you're all still reading and enjoying my story, and, as much as the favorites and follows are appreciated, the only way I can truly know you're reading and enjoying is with a review. So, please, even if the review is just a simple one, though I absolutely adore the detailed messages, send them in! And with each Chapter, if possible. Because, without the feedback, the motivation to write is hard to come by, and I love this story so much, I don't want to lose interest in it.

With that, here's the next Chapter. I hope you all enjoy it, and, **please** review!

Patrick was still asleep, being slowly woken up and taken off the pain medication by his Physician, who, since he was no longer in the E.R., was now Dr. Cullen, so Belle and James went to the cafeteria to have a cup of coffee, while they waited.

"I'm glad to see you're all right, Belle," said James, as he grasped their readied drinks from the counter, where he'd just paid for them, and carried the items over to the table she sat at. "And I don't just mean after yesterday."

Belle gave Mr. Hockstetter a soft smile, when he placed her cup of hospital cafeteria coffee in front of her, then took up residence in the chair close to her with his, knowing he was also speaking of her breakdown after Georgie's death, and the almost year she had to spend away from Derry because of it.

"Thank you, Sir," she respectfully replied, while she wrapped her

slender fingers around the hot beverage, even though she didn't want to talk about it. "I am."

"I can tell," James replied, quirking his raven hued brow knowingly at her, and Belle couldn't help but laugh softly, since she could tell he was now talking about her encounter with Henry.

"He deserved it," Belle said, as she lifted her coffee to her lips for her first drink of it.

"I don't disagree," spoke James, flicking a glance down at his own beverage, which he absently spun around on the surface of the table with his long fingers. "I've never understood what Patrick sees in those punks." Sighing softly, he lifted the coffee to his mouth, going on with a few more words, before he tipped it back to drink. "But, then again, I've never understood Patrick."

Belle's dark brown brow furrowed at Mr. Hockstetter's words, though not in confusion, as it wasn't the first time she heard someone say they didn't understand Patrick, she'd just heard it from Caroline the other night, after all, but out of sadness at the knowledge a Father didn't know his own son. "I'm sorry, Sir."

"Ah, it's not something I worry about anymore," responded James, as he lowered his cup back down onto the table, where he started once more twirling it, now with both hands. "I tried for a long time, when he was a boy, especially after Avery, but. . . " Sighing softly, he trailed off, seemingly becoming lost in his thoughts, and Belle remained silent, watching him, before he suddenly snapped out of it, and offered her a soft smile, which reaching out to gently pat her nearest arm, as he spoke once more. "You seem to be the only one to have ever cracked his walls. You were always a good influence on him."

Belle slowly licked her lips, averting her gaze to the table's top. She had so much guilt when it came to Patrick. Maybe she should've tried harder to get through to him when he joined up with Henry and the others. Maybe she should've at least kept in contact with him while she'd been gone. Maybe if she'd done either of those things, Angela and James would have a better understanding of their own son, or at least have some semblance of a relationship with him.

Patrick would tell her, when they'd been dating, that he didn't believe his parents gave a single fuck about him. His Dad was always working, and, when he wasn't, he'd be all over him about seemingly every life choice he's ever made, while his Mom would more often than not refuse to even look him in the eyes, as though she was afraid of him or something.

However, maybe now that Angela and James had almost lost him, they'd make more of an effort. Or maybe they wouldn't, and things would go back to exactly the way they were before. The latter option seemed more plausible, especially here in Derry. Parents relationships with their children were never ideal, or really anywhere near where they should be. Belle's seemed to be the only exception to that, and she often wondered if that was because they'd spent time outside of the town.

Bryan was indeed born and raised here, but he'd left at 18 to join the Military, and hadn't returned until Belle was almost at a walking age, while Katherine never lived in Derry until that point in her life.

That Clown, whatever It was, seemed to be some kind of living evil, infecting the town and the people in it with Its hatred and ferocity, Its sheer sinister nature. A feat that would be made all the more easy if It did indeed reside in the sewers, as she currently believed.

It was not getting Patrick though. At least not anymore than It already had. He was hers, and she was going to fight for him, like she would always believe she should have done with Georgie.

"Mr. Hockstetter," Belle spoke up, drawing his attention back over to her. "If Patrick's able to leave the hospital today, and if it's all right with you, his Mom, and my parents, could he spend the night at my house? We've been apart for so long, we have so much to talk about." Pausing, she laughed softly, before going on. "And the first time we tried to spend time together after almost a year, we were attacked by a bear." Shrugging her slender shoulders, she continued, offering his Dad a sweet smile. She wasn't stupid. She knew how to get what she wanted from men, and, while she probably didn't need to rely on such matters with James, as he was, at least to her, a nice man, she nonetheless knew they couldn't hurt. "Hopefully we'll be safer at my house."

James chuckled softly at her words, using the hand still resting on her slender forearm to give it another gentle pat. "Yeah, of course, Belle. That should be fine."

She sent him a renewed smile, as a wave of relief flooded her. She knew, if Patrick was released from the hospital today, he'd just be climbing into her window tonight anyway, so, at least, this way, them being together was already parent approved.

"Thank you, Sir," Belle replied, before her phone began to ring from where it was tucked away in her jeans. "Oh! Excuse me."

James waved the hand he'd had on her forearm in the air, then sat back in his chair, while she got up from hers, reaching into her back pocket to pull the item free, as she moved a few feet away from the table.

Holding it up in front of her, she could see, on the screen, that there was no name assigned to the number that was calling her, meaning whoever it was wasn't in her contacts, but Belle nonetheless pressed, 'Accept', then lifted the phone to the side of her beautiful face.

"Hello?" she spoke in her lovely sweet Australian accented voice.

"Belle, hey, it's Beverly," came the voice of the person on the other end of the line. "Uh, Beverly Marsh."

"Hi, love," Belle said, even as her dark brow furrowed a bit at the sound of the redhead's voice, since its tone was nowhere near as cheerful as it'd been the previous day, when they'd met outside of Starbucks. "Is everything all right?"

"Yeah," answered Beverly, while attempting to sound like the words she was speaking were true. "Yeah, just. . . If you're free, I'll take that coffee now."

Despite the fact that she was currently at the hospital, waiting for Patrick to wake up, and aside from the knowledge that she'd literally just been drinking the aforementioned beverage with his Dad, Belle still wanted to meet up with the redhead, especially as she could tell something was wrong, even though she was currently denying it.

"Yes, of course," spoke Belle. "I'll meet you there in about ten minutes?"

"Sounds good," responded Beverly. "Bye."

"Bye," Belle said, before lowering the phone, and pressing the red button on the screen to end the call. She took a moment to think through the reasons why the redhead suddenly wanted to meet up, before giving herself a little shake, then turning to move back over to the table. "Mr. Hockstetter." She held up her phone, then tucked it into her back pocket once more. "That was a friend of mine. She needs to see me. Would it be all right if I left for a little while? I promise I'll be back as soon as possible."

"Of course," replied James, setting his coffee down, then rising to his feet, an action that immediately made her feel the size of a doll, as he was well over 6'0" tall, and obviously where Patrick had gotten his own impressive height from. "There's no telling how long it'll be, and, while I appreciate the company, I'm sure you'd much rather spend your time with your friends." Smiling softly, an action Belle did as well, he nodded his dark head at the entrance to the cafeteria. "Go."

"Thank you, Sir," Belle answered, offering him one last sweet smile, before she turned, and headed out.

When Belle arrived at the coffee shop, she parked along the sidewalk, as she'd done the previous day, then headed inside, where she didn't see Beverly yet there, so she got her favorite drink, and sat down at a table to wait, not sure what to get the redhead, since she said she didn't like coffee.

Absently playing around on her phone, Belle looked up from it every time she heard the door open, and, after doing so about half a dozen times, Beverly entered, looking around for her.

Belle's dark brow furrowed at the sight of her, as her long red hair was almost completely gone. While yesterday, it'd been in a ponytail at the base of her neck, that hung down the front of her shoulder a fair couple of inches past her chest, today it was now short enough that it didn't even cover her throat. It was still full and curly, but

otherwise what would be considered a pixie cut. Why had she cut all of her hair off?

"Bev!" Belle called to her, standing up so that she could see her in the somewhat crowded room, and waving, offering the redhead a soft smile, when she looked over, seeing her.

"Hey, Belle," Bev greeted, once she made her way through the shop to where the beautiful brunette stood, and reached out to hug her. "Thanks for meeting me."

"Of course, love," replied Belle, as she embraced the girl warmly in return, before gazing questioningly at her, when the two parted, and sat down at the table. "What happened to your long red hair?"

"Oh!" Bev exclaimed, lifting a hand to absently touch her now incredibly shorter scarlet tresses. "I, uh, I cut it."

"I can see that," Belle said, laughing softly, an action that caused the redhead to do so as well. "But why?"

"I don't know," Beverly shrugged, lowering her arm to the table. "I just. . . needed a change, that's all."

"I get it," Belle responded with a nod. "Sometimes a girl needs to take control over something, and our hair is the only thing we truly possess." Laughing softly, she gestured at her own endless lush chocolate curls. "Obviously, I haven't had to do that in a while."

Beverly giggled sweetly, before gazing questioningly at the brunette. "When *is* the last time you cut your hair?"

"Uh, it's been over a decade," answered Belle, causing Bev's eyes to widen, before she moved her hand to indicate the counter. "What do you want to drink?"

"I don't know," said Bev, looking over at where the people of Derry were lined up for the expensive, delicious beverages. "Like I said, I'm not a big coffee drinker."

"Well, how about a frappuccino?" offered Belle, pointing at her drink, as it's what it was. "It's mainly milk, ice, some flavored syrup, and

whipped cream on top. Very little vanilla coffee beans used."

"That sounds good," Bev replied, and the brunette nodded, offering her a smile, before she got up from the table, then headed over to get in line for the drink, returning to the table with it after about ten minutes.

"Here you go," Belle said, as she placed the long green straw in the drink, then placed it in front of the redhead.

"Thanks," answered Beverly, reaching out to wrap one of her hands around the cold beverage. "How much do I owe you?"

"It's on me," Belle answered, waving her own slender limb in the air, while she settled in her seat once more, crossing one leg over the other, then folding an arm over the table's top, while the other grasped her own drink.

"Thanks," Beverly repeated, smiling shyly, before she took her first sip of the beverage, her blue-green eyes widening when the taste of it first hit her tongue. "Oh, wow! That's delicious!"

Belle laughed softly, nodding at her own frappuccino. "Now you know why it's my favorite. Truthfully, I don't like coffee myself. My friends are coffee *fiends* however, and would always insist on going to the Starbucks in the next town over every weekend, so I was *very* glad when I discovered this drink. Gave me something to actually order, and enjoy, rather than just take a few sips of, unable to believe I'd paid \$5.00 for it."

Beverly giggled sweetly, lifting her free hand to cover her mouth as she did so, and Belle couldn't help but smile at the sight and the sound.

"Thanks again, Belle," Bev said, lowering the limb after a moment, her voice and expression full of sincerity. "Like I said yesterday, I don't exactly have a lot of offers to hang out rolling in."

"Don't mention it, love," replied Belle. "Besides, it's the least I can do after what you did for the boys."

"What?" Bev asked, her brow furrowing in confusion.

"Ben told me what happened with Henry Bowers yesterday, and that you helped Bill and the others get stuff from the pharmacy to take care of him," explained Belle, causing the redhead's face to dawn with realization. "I'm really glad you were there."

"It was nothing," Beverly went on, waving her own free hand in the air. "I'm just happy I could help." Her brow furrowing once more, she continued. "How do you know Ben?"

"I met him at the Library yesterday," explained Belle. "He's such a sweetheart. And he ended up spending the night at our house last night." Beverly nodded in understanding, then the brunette went on, leaning forward a bit, an action the redhead followed suit in doing, so that she could lower her voice. "If you don't mind my asking, how exactly *did* you help?"

"Oh!" Beverly said, flicking a glance around to make sure no one was nearby, and could hear them, before she leaned back in toward Belle once more, a smirk of pride in herself tugging at the corners of her lips. "They, uh, didn't have enough money, for all of the stuff Eddie wanted to buy, so I distracted Mr. Keene, while they slipped out."

Belle nodded in understanding, a bright smile of her own beginning to alight her beautiful face. She knew she shouldn't be happy that her brother and his friends stole, but from what she remembered about the Pharmacist, he's a creep, so it evened out, in her opinion, especially since she guessed Beverly's "distracting" was her flirting with the older man.

"Learning the power of flirtation, I see," Belle replied, giggling sweetly, when the redhead once more smiled in pride. "Very nice, Ms. Marsh." Looking up, her joy faded, when she saw none other than Mr. Keene's daughter, Greta, entering the Starbucks, tailed by her friends. "Well, speak of the Devil. Or, more accurately, the Devil's daughter."

Beverly's own happiness swiftly disappeared, as she spun in her chair, in order to look over at the group of girls now in line. "Oh, no." Turning back to face Belle, she cupped one of her hands against the side of her face in an attempt to hide, which she knew was pointless, as she was pretty much the only redhead in town. "She *hates* me."

"Why?" Belle asked, her brow furrowing in confusion and question, unable to image how anyone could hate Beverly.

"There are these. . . rumors about me at school," Beverly reluctantly explained, with a roll of her blue eyes. "That. . . I'm a slut, basically."

Belle's brow only furrowed more at her words, and she flicked a glance at Greta and her friends, then returned her gaze to the redhead.

"I'm not," Beverly quickly added on, before she laughed softly. "I've only ever kissed one boy. Not that anything I do or say matters."

Belle knew who the one boy was, it was Bill, during the school play when he and the redhead had been in third grade. "I believe you, Bev. And I know sometimes it's easier to just give into the rumors than fight them, especially when so many people believe them." Once more, she shifted her brown eyes over onto the female bully and her friends. She knew girls could be so much more vicious than boys, especially towards other girls, and even more so if it had to do with boys. "I still don't get why that would make her hate you though."

"Well, I heard a particular reason," said Beverly. "But I don't think I should tell you."

"Why?" Belle asked, with a gentle shake of her endless lushly curled head. "Does it involve someone I know? One of my friends?"

"Sort of," Bev replied, shrugging, but, before either girl could say more, Greta and her friends took notice of the two.

"Look at this girls," came the amused voice of Greta, as she and those with her came walking up to Belle and Bev's table, carrying their drinks. "How are you paying for that drink, Beaverly?" She nodded at the frappuccino in front of the redhead. "Is one of the guys you're fucking treating you?"

"Yes," Belle replied, turning to face the girls, since, with the way she was sitting, they couldn't see her, at least her face, until she did so. "That would be me."

The smile quickly faded from Greta's face, while her companions

began murmuring to each other behind her, since, to them, Belle, and her own friends, were those beautiful older girls in school that they so badly wanted to be like and hang out with. "Belle. We didn't know you were back in town." Lifting her free hand, she gestured at Bev. "What are you doing with this trash? Or has the slut not told you what she did with your boyfriend while you were gone?"

Belle's rich chocolate brow furrowed at the sudden mention of Patrick, and she flicked a glance at Beverly, even as her mind flashed back to Henry's words, both at the school the first day she'd been back at school, in addition to those from earlier at the hospital.

"Guess not," Greta laughed at the brunette's reaction, before she shifted her gaze onto the redhead once more. "What's the matter, slut? Suddenly ashamed of all the guys you've spread your legs for?"

"Greta, I appreciate you stopping by, I really do," Belle said, getting to her feet, as she pasted a fake bright smile onto her face, which she quickly dropped, while she went on to the female bully. "But if you call Beverly a 'slut' one more time, the next thing that comes out of your mouth is going to be your teeth."

Greta's own smile swiftly vanished at the brunette's words, while she shifted uncomfortably on her feet, before Belle nodded at the door, and she got the hint.

"Come on, girls," she said to her friends, and Belle remained standing, watching as the group left the coffee shop, then taking up her seat once more.

"I am *so* sorry, Belle," Beverly spoke up, her pale cheeks flushed with embarrassment.

"It's all right, Bev," replied Belle, as she crossed one leg over the other once more. "Girls are far more cruel than boys. Do you mind telling me what that was about though?"

"You mean, with Patrick?" Beverly asking, sighing softly when Belle nodded. "It's not true. He had plenty of offers while you were gone, but never from me. Greta though. . . She all but threw herself at him, and he turned her down every time."

Belle couldn't help the look of disgust she took over her beautiful face at the idea of that girl with Patrick.

"And then this rumor started going around that *I* too had thrown myself at him, but he hadn't turned *me* down," Beverly went on, with a fresh sigh, as well as a roll of her blue eyes.

"So, Greta's upset because she thinks he said, 'No' to her, but, 'Yes' to you?" Belle asked, leaning forward on the table in order to fold her arms across its surface.

"Basically," Beverly replied. "But I swear I didn't, Belle."

"It's okay, love," Belle said, smiling softly, as she reached across the table to gently grasp the redhead's nearest arm. "I believe you."

"Okay, good," Beverly breathed in relief, returning the brunette's smile, while she placed her hand overtop hers on her arm. "Thank you."

After finishing their drinks, during which Belle hadn't been successful in getting Beverly to tell her what was wrong, as she knew something was, but, like with Ben, she figured the girl had already shared enough with her for one day, so she let it go, though made sure to tell her, as they parted ways outside of the coffee shop, that if she *ever* needed her, to call her, and she'd be there.

Upon offering to drive her somewhere, which Beverly turned down, saying she had her bike, and that she was just going to ride around town for a while, Belle got into her Mom's Mini Cooper, started up the engine, then began back toward the hospital.

The drive was peaceful. Belle had her music on her phone playing through the car's stereo system, and the windows were rolled down, allowing the now afternoon breeze to wash over her beautiful face, as she guided the vehicle through the town.

She was just turning onto a residential block, that was a shortcut to the hospital, when she began to hear something coming from inside the car.

At first, Belle thought it had to do with her music, so she turned the volume on the radio down, but it did nothing for the level of the odd sound, which she could tell was still coming from the Mini Cooper.

Her brow furrowing, she turned her head to flick a glance into the back seat, but there was nothing back there, aside from the folded up foil for the windshield that would be put up when the car was parked on hot days, to keep as much sun out as possible, and prevent the interior from being damaged.

Facing forward once more, the noise continued, and Belle sighed softly, as she thought that it was coming from the engine, meaning something was wrong with the car, crossed her mind.

Pulling over onto the side of the road, she placed the Mini Cooper in park, then pulled the keys in the ignition, and the car went silent, except for that sound.

It defiantly wasn't coming from the engine, as it was now off, and Belle whipped around in her seat, when she heard the noise again, but, with all of the other sounds now gone, she could better pinpoint it, and it was defiantly coming from the rear of the car, though there was still nothing in the backseat that would be causing it.

The trunk.

Pushing open the driver's side door, Belle climbed out, turning to face the back of the Mini Cooper, and she walked a few feet outward from the car, before she moved to the rear of it, her gaze locked onto the hatchback.

Palming the key fob, she readied her thumb above the button that would open the trunk, as she came to a halt by it, her heart now racing inside of her chest, and she could still hear the strange noise, which was now not only louder, but more clear. It was almost a squishing sound, like when you walked in shoes that had been soaked by rain.

Licking her lips, Belle flicked a quick glance around, there were people who lived on the block outside of their houses, either washing their cars, or striding down the sidewalk, walking their dogs, or just

taking an afternoon stroll, then returned her gaze to the hatchback, taking in a deep breath, which she held, before she pushed down on the button, and the trunk popped open.

What was inside tore a blood curdling, ear piercing scream from her throat. It was Patrick. Or, rather, what was left of him, as he lay, not only covered in blood, but covered in thick, wet, black leeches, which were latched onto seemingly every part of his body, sucking him dry of the life giving fluid, while his unmoving, dead eyes stared upward, opened wide in terror.

Instinctively backing away from the car, a second horrified shriek, which easily could've shattered glass, sounded from her, mixed in with the disgusting suckling sounds coming from the parasites, which she now realized was the noise she'd been able to hear even inside the vehicle, with her music playing, and the wind moving through the open windows.

"Patrick," she gasped out, unknowingly moving out into the street, and she spun around in surprise, when the sudden honking of a car horn hit her, just in time to see an oncoming vehicle swerve to miss her.

Belle, breathing heavily, looked around, after the car continued past her, the angry driver screaming at her as it went, and what she saw caused confusion to begin quickly overriding her horror.

No one was looking at her. No one was rushing over to see if she was all right, to find out what happened. Everyone was simply still going about their business, seemingly blind, deaf, and dumb to the terrified girl standing in the middle of the street, having just been almost hit by a car, while her boyfriend's dead body was sucked dry by leeches in the open hatchback of the Mini Cooper a few feet from her.

Belle's brow, which had furrowed in disbelief, soon smoothed out, when her gaze fell upon the nearest street corner, and she saw It. She saw the Clown.

It stood, in broad daylight, on a busy residential street, Its back to her, a single red balloon attached to a white ribbon clutched in one gloved hand, but, as though It could tell as soon as she spotted It, It

slowly turned to face her a second later, and that sinister smile of Its quickly appeared on Its white face.

"Do you want a balloon, Belle?" the Clown asked, and her brow furrowed again, in renewed horror and fear. It was the first time It had spoken to her, and Its voice was simply. . . wrong. Like something that didn't belong in this World.

Instinctively spinning around to flee, Belle soon came to a halt, when she found herself facing the open hatchback of the Mini Cooper again, and saw there was now nothing in it.

No Patrick, no blood, no leeches. It was completely empty, just as it had been when she'd first left the house this morning.

Turning once more, Belle sought out the street corner where she'd just seen the Clown, and it too was unoccupied. It, along with the balloon, was gone.

Looking around, she once more saw all of the people who lived on the street continuing to go on about their lives, still curiously immune to what had just occurred right outside of their homes.

Continuing to pant a bit for breath, her heart still racing, though slowly, but surely, returning to its normal race, Belle turned to face the Mini Cooper again, and quickly reached out to close the trunk, then rushed back into the driver's seat, starting up the car, before taking off toward the hospital, now with a renewed sense of urgency. Even though she knew what she'd seen had just been another trick of the Clown's, she had to be sure. She had to know he was all right.

When Belle arrived at the hospital, she ran through the building, taking the stairs, rather than the elevator, as she simply didn't have the patience right now for the latter, and earned more than a few curious looks from staff and patients alike. She even could've sworn she heard Angela and James calling to her as she went, but she ignored them.

Bursting into the hospital room that belonged to Patrick, she skidded to a halt, when her eyes fell upon the bed, and she found it empty.

Though not in the sense that it'd been made up. Rather, the covers were turned down, and there were leftover indentations in the pillow and the mattress from its previous occupant.

"No," Belle breathed, as her chest quickly rose and fell with the heavy breaths she was taking, not necessarily from the bolt through the hospital she'd just done, but from the tidal wave of horror that was swiftly washing over every inch of her, when she didn't find who she was desperately looking for, and her mind filled with the images of his dead body, covered in leeches, in the Mini Cooper's trunk. Had it be real? Her heart began to race with renewed panic at that thought.

"Belle," came a voice from behind her, causing her to swiftly turn around, and nearly collapse to the floor in relief, when she saw whom it belonged to.

It was Patrick. There he stood, in his hospital attire, which was the same she'd been given yesterday, that of a white t-shirt, and blue PJ pants, just a few feet from her, in the small hallway the room had once you came through the door, to accommodate the bathroom and its entrance.

His face was no longer bandaged, as it had been the day before, since, despite his wounds not requiring stitches, they still needed to be covered, but they'd now been removed, revealing the small cuts that dotted his visage, in what looked like a wide bite mark going vertical, though at a curve, up his right cheek, then across the bridge of his nose, and partially back down the left side of his face.

What Angela had relayed to Belle and her parents from the E.R. Doctor about Patrick's wounds had been true. She could remember all of the blood that'd coated nearly the entire middle and lower half of his visage, and soaked the front of his t-shirt, but, despite that, the cuts on his face it'd all come from were barely visible, even in the bright light of the hospital room, partially thanks to his tan skin.

Sure she'd never before experienced such an intense wave of relief, it gave her the strength to stay on her feet, and swiftly close the distance between them, where she threw her slender arms into place around his neck, hugging him tightly, while a thick sheen of tears quickly filled with rich chocolate brown eyes, which she soon

squeezed shut, soon turning her beautiful face to bury it into the crook of his neck, where she took in a deep, shuddered breath of his familiar scent.

Patrick's brow furrowed in confusion and concern at her actions. She looked like she'd just seen a ghost when she spun around to face him, and the relief that had crossed her beautiful, beloved face when she saw him only furthered the emotions he was feeling. But he nonetheless instinctively reacted when he found himself in her arms, lifting his own long lanky limbs to wrap tightly around her slender form in return.

"What is it?" he asked, securing one arm about her waist, while the other moved higher to grasp the back of her neck through her endless veil of lush chocolate curls, as his protectiveness and possessiveness of her began to flood him with the same burning passion it always did, and his next words came in a growl, not aimed at her, but directed at whatever had caused *his* girl the pain she was currently in. "**What is it?**"

Gently shaking her head, Belle pulled back enough to look at him, which didn't help the rage that was running through every part of him like boiling lava, as it let him see her beautiful face, which was now wet with tears, and he instinctively lifted one ring wearing hand to brush them away with the backs of his long fingers, actions he did with a gentleness he was only able to express when it came to her.

"Nothing," she said, doing her best to smile reassuringly at him, while she cupped either side of his handsome, cut adorned visage with her slender hands, the limbs soon beginning to absently comb through his wavy raven hair. "I was just so worried about you."

"It's okay now," Patrick replied after a few seconds, continuing to stroke her cheek with the backs of the fingers of his one hand, while the other rested on her waist. "We're together."

Nodding in agreement, Belle moved her arms back around around his neck, pressing a kiss to his cheek, making sure to do so on an area that wasn't covered in cuts, then hugging him tightly once more, as she closed her eyes again, having to lean up on her toes in order to do so, since he was a fair bit taller than her, about half a foot, while

his own limbs secured about her slender form, resuming their earlier positions of one locked around her waist, and the other grasping the back of her neck through her silky hair.

"I won't let **anything** take you from me again," continued Patrick, his voice holding a slight fresh protective growl, while his words were ones she silently agreed with, though more for herself, as she was **not** going to lose him. He belonged to her just as much as she did him, and she'd battle that Clown to Hell and back, something she simply knew he would do as well for her, before she let It take him, or Bill, from her.

- Author's Note - All right, guys, there's the new Chapter. The leeches were a nice Patrick nod for you books fans. ;) And there'll be plenty more to come, especially as the next Chapter will be a BIG one for Belle and Patrick, as he spends the night at her house after being released from the hospital, and maybe we'll find out why Patrick wears those rings we see on him in the movie, and maybe they have something to do with rings of her own that Belle wears. ;) So, be sure to send in those reviews, and let me know you not only enjoyed this Chapter, but are excited for the next one! :)

7. Reunited

- Author's Note - Hello, loves! I'm **so** happy to see you're all still reading and enjoying my story! A HUGE thanks to **XxCrimsonSnowxX**, **Guest**, **spiritgirl16**, **chelsnichole12**, **Nirvana14**, **Winchestergirl123**, **grace s**, **LoveFiction2017**, **SpellSlaughterWithoutLaughter**, **Guest** (2), **MedievalWarriorPrincess**, and **Ahlysab** for reviewing! And also to **DaughterofJerusalem**, whom I spoke to in PM.

Also, **Guest** asked if Belle will be spending time with the Losers, and, to answer that question, yes, she most defiantly will.

Something I keep forgetting to mention is that time is moving a bit slower in my story, than in the movie. In the movie, everything happens one event after the other, one day after the other, with the exception of the time period where the Losers go their separate ways after the Neibolt House incident.

But, in my story, that won't be the case, allowing for plenty of room for Belle and all that she adds and brings to the story.

For instance, everything prior to the Quarry has happened in the story, but the Quarry scene has yet to happen, though there **is** mention of it in this Chapter, and it will most likely take place next Chapter.

So, I hope that makes sense, sounds good, and answers Guest's question! If any of you have any questions, just let me know, and I'll do my best to answer them.

With that, here's the next Chapter. I hope you all enjoy it, and **PLEASE** don't forget to review!

"Nice shirt," Patrick said, accompanied by his trademark smirk, as he plopped down onto the side of his hospital bed, his eyes sparkling, while they flicked an appreciative glance up and down Belle's slender, just the right amount of curvaceous, form.

"Oh!" she exclaimed in response, as she looked downward at herself. She'd completely forgotten she was still wearing his long sleeved red plaid button down shirt. "Thank you."

Smiling softly, Belle walked over to where he sat, stepping in between his long parted legs, a place he immediately welcomed her, lifting his large hands to grasp either side of her small waist, while her own delicate limbs raised to lovingly cradled his handsome, cut adorned face.

"I found it in my drawer last night," she continued, as she began absently stroking his wounded cheeks with gentle brushes of her thumbs, a soft sigh soon ghosting past her lush pink lips, while she lightly shrugged her shoulders. "They wouldn't let me stay here last night, so, wearing it made me feel as though I was with you."

"You're always with me, baby," replied Patrick, moving his hands around to splay them across her back, which delightfully tangled the limbs up in her endless chocolate curls.

"No," Belle spoke, with a gentle shake of head. "I left you, remember? For eight months."

It was his turn to sigh, as he retracted his long limbs from around her, in order to grasp her slender forearms, which he soon started rubbing the lengths of. "Look, that doesn't matter anymore, okay? I promise." Expelling another breath of regret, he averted his gaze from her for a few seconds, before looking back up at her, an action that didn't require much tilting of his head, as, with him sitting, and her standing before him, it made up a fair bit of their sizable height difference. "I'm sorry I was such an asshole to you. It just hurt so bad when you left. I was fucking lost without you."

"I know, love," responded Belle, her heart aching at the pain so evident in his eyes, and she absently played with a few strands of his wavy raven tresses, while he turned his head to press a kiss to the inside of her right wrist. "Like you said, it's okay now. We're together."

Stepping closer to him, she leaned down, and pressed her lips to the top of his head, lingering there, her chocolate orbs slipped closed,

while she breathed in his scent, Patrick next wrapping his arms back around her slender form, as he rested his forehead against her soft chest.

Belle knew they had a lot to talk about. They hadn't even spoken one word to one another about the Clown yet. But it could all wait. He was spending the night at her house, after all. At least, if the adults involved agreed, and, as though on cue, the door to the hospital room opened a few seconds later, drawing her and his attention from each other, then over to the entrance, when Patrick's parents entered, looking startled and out of breath, which was when she remembered them calling out to her during her bolt through the building moments ago.

"Belle!" Angela exclaimed, as she and her husband came to a halt in the room. "Are you all right, sweetheart? You ran past us like the Devil was chasing you."

"I'm so sorry, Mrs. Hockstetter," responded Belle, turning to face she and James, at least as much as Patrick would allow her to, since he kept one long arm securely locked around her waist, so she wrapped one of her own about his lean shoulders. "I just had this horrible feeling of dread on my way back, and I wanted to make sure Patrick was all right."

"You gave us quite a scare," James spoke up, while he and his wife relaxed at her explanation, before laughing softly. "Thought maybe the bear had come back to haunt you."

"The bear?" Patrick asked, his brow furrowing, as he lifted his gaze to Belle, who promptly moved her hand from his shoulder, in order to clamp it over his mouth. She'd been so preoccupied with the truth, she completely forgot about her lie, and that he didn't yet know it.

"I didn't mean to frighten you two," Belle said, sending his parents an apologetic smile, thankful when the pair took their eyes off of her and their son in order to look at one another, as Patrick's response to her having her slender limb over his lips was to playfully bit it, causing her to send him a warning look, even while he smiled, lifting his free arm to grasp the hand, which she instinctively pulled back at his nip to it, and hold it on his shoulder.

As always with Patrick, it was both amusing and concerning that he was able to joke about something. After all, he'd literally had something try to bite his face off the day before, yet, here he was, jokingly nipping Belle's hand.

"It's all right, honey," Angela replied, smiling in return at the beautiful girl. "We're just glad you're all right."

"Anyway, while you were gone," spoke up James, whom Belle now noticed was carrying a small piece of luggage in one hand. "I spoke with your parents, and they approved your idea, so I managed to catch Angela before she left the house, and she packed an overnight bag. Once we get the all clear from Dr. Cullen, you two can take off."

Belle smiled in relief, and sent the man a look of gratitude, while he set the piece of luggage on the end of the bed. "Thank you, Sir."

"You're welcome, sweetheart," replied James, with a smile of his own aimed toward her.

"I'll go see if we can find him," Angela said, reaching out to touch Belle's nearest arm, which hung free and unoccupied at her side, and she nodded in response, before her brow furrowed, when she noticed the woman flick a rather unsure glance at her son, then all but scurry out of the room, as though she couldn't get out of there fast enough.

"Is somebody going to tell me what the fuck's going on?" asked Patrick, flicking a glance from Belle to his Father, and then back again.

James sighed softly, an action that caused Belle to instinctively tense up. She'd heard plenty about he and his son's relationship, from both parties, and had witnessed her fair share of events between the two when they'd been dating before, but now she was alone with the two, for the first time in almost a year. As soon as Angela left, the air in the room become thick, heavy, and beyond uncomfortable.

"Belle's arranged it so that you can stay with her at her house tonight, since you two have been apart for quite a while," he answered, in a rather stern, somewhat raised, voice. "So, whatever **your** version of 'best behavior' is, I expect you to be on it, and not embarrass your

Mother and I."

"Wouldn't dream of it, Pop," Patrick responded with a smirk, even while Belle could feel the longer fingers of the hand he had at her back curling into a tight fist.

James sent his son a glare, as a fresh breath of anger expelled sharply out of his nose, before he looked over at Belle, and it was as if the mere sight of her caused all of his rage to swiftly disappear.

He offered her a soft smile, and reached out to touch her arm, in the same manner his wife had. "I'll go see if the Pharmacy has his prescriptions ready."

"Thank you, Sir," Belle said to him, returning his smile with one of her own, before watching at James shot his son a last look, then turn, and strode from the room.

"A bear?" Patrick asked, lifting a renewed sparkling gaze to her, completely uncaring of what had just transpired between he and his Father.

"I couldn't tell anyone the truth," sighed Belle, as she pulled away from him, his arm falling to his thigh when she did so, in order to reach into her back pocket for her phone, which had just sounded with a text message alert.

"Sure you could've," laughed Patrick. "Everything goes in one ear and out the other in the fucking town, anyway."

Belle looked down at her phone, only to see it hadn't be hers that she'd just heard. Sure, she had plenty of alerts, but none were from the last few seconds.

Looking over, she spotted Patrick's phone lit up where it rested on the nightstand next to his hospital bed, and a fresh soft sigh escaped her, while she tucked her own back in her pocket, at the sight of Henry's name on the screen.

"It's yours," Belle said, moving a few steps away, going to absently fiddle with the packed bag James had left on the edge of the bed, while Patrick picked up his phone, and she couldn't help but watch

him out of the corner of her eye, as he read the text message, then those that had come before it, most likely during his time asleep, before quickly clicking off the item, and tossing it back onto the nightstand. "Aren't you going to answer him?"

"No," Patrick replied, looking over at where she now stood. "Why would I answer him?"

"Isn't he your friend?" inquired Belle, with a light shrug of her slender shoulders.

"No," repeated Patrick, this time with a fresh laugh, as he got to his feet, and easily closed the few feet of distance between the two of them, where he lifted one his hands, then began absently combing his long fingers through her endless chocolate curls. "He's a means of entertainment. They all are. I had to do something while you were gone."

"They were here earlier," Belle continued in her beautiful, soft Australian accented voice. "The three of them."

"I'm glad I was asleep," Patrick laughed, while he pulled some of her silky tresses over her shoulder, behind her back, exposing the side of her milky white neck to his him, which he begin to stroke with his long fingers. Though his smile soon faded, when he saw that the expression on her beautiful face didn't change from the rather serious one it'd started to hold when she'd first been left alone in the room with he and his Father, and his own joy swiftly left him, to be replaced by his protectiveness and possessiveness of her. "Did they say something to you?" Moving his hand from her neck, he grasped her chin between his thumb and forefinger, then used the hold to urge her to look at him, as his voice took on that familiar growl. "Did they *do* something to you?"

"They didn't do anything to me, Patrick," Belle reassured, lifting one of her own slender limbs to gently grasp his, while she looked up and over at him. Despite it all, she did actually kind of like Belch and Victor, especially since Ben told her they'd tried to stop Henry from hurting him. It was Bowers that she truly hated. "And, as always, Henry was the only one talking."

"**What** did he **say**?" Patrick growled out in response, truthfully not comforted by her words. Anything done or said to her by anyone was not acceptable to him.

"Let's talk about it later," Belle said, turning to face him, where she raised her other hand to join the first on his own still grasping her chin. "Trust me, I did more damage to him than he to me."

"What did you do?" Patrick asked, his anger deflating a bit at her words, as the hints of his trademark smile began to tug at the corners of his lips.

"Well, I'm going to have to ice my hand later," replied Belle, holding up the limb she'd punched Henry in the jaw with not once, but twice, causing her boyfriend to notice the fresh bruises rising up on her delicate knuckles, ones completely different from those inflicted yesterday in the sewers.

"You hit him?" Patrick inquired, his smirk completely breaking out, while pride in his girl started to flood every inch of him, and he moved his hands to gently grasp her indicated injured one, to better get a look at the wounds.

"Twice," Belle answered, before sighing softly. "His jaw's as thick as his head."

Patrick couldn't help but laugh at her words, releasing his hold on her hand, in order to lift both of his own, and lovingly cup her beautiful face in them, while he met her brown eyes with his own sparkling blue ones. "Such a savage."

Belle laughed, rolling her rich dark brown orbs slightly, while Patrick leaned in, and pressed a kiss to her forehead, before wrapping his long lanky arms around her, using the hold to pull her to him.

"That's my girl," he continued, his voice laced with pride, while she wasn't able to prevent herself from smiling in response, as she lifted her own slender limbs to hug him in return. "Nobody messes with her."

After Dr. Cullen signed off on Patrick's release, James having collected the medications he'd prescribed the teenager from the Pharmacy, Belle and Patrick left for the former's house.

Belle drove, while Patrick sat beside her in the passenger seat. He had his window down, and rested an elbow on the open frame, absently tracing his lips with his thumb, as he gazed seemingly unseeingly at the passing by scenery.

Even though it was a comfortable silence, music playing softly through the sound system via her phone, Belle would flick a glance over at him every once and a while. She couldn't imagine what was going through his mind. Now that he was awake, and the two had reunited, she guessed the events of the previous day were finally making their way into his brain.

She let him process everything, or, rather, his version of the task, as he was. She was right there if he needed anything.

He remained silent the entire drive, and, soon, Belle was pulling the Mini Cooper into the driveway of her family's house, then parking it behind Bryan's truck, and killing the engine.

She palmed the keys, then grabbed her phone, which she tucked into her back pocket, while Patrick got out, fetching the bag his Mom had packed him from the back seat, which also now contained his prescriptions, and the two next made their way up the front porch, Belle smiling, an action he returned, when Patrick wrapped an arm around her slender shoulders, causing her to respond by securing one of her own about his waist from behind.

Opening the front door, the pair stepped into the house, and Belle let go of him in order to close the entrance between them, before turning to face the interior once more.

"Anybody home?" she called, while she stretched up on her tip toes in order to hang the keys to her Mom's car on one of the decorative hooks by the front door.

"There she is!" came a response, causing Belle to look over to see Katherine coming down the hallway, a bright smile on her face, while

she wiped her hands off on a kitchen towel, as she'd been in the aforementioned room, preparing dinner, when her daughter and Patrick came home. "Hi, sweetie."

"Hi, Mom," Belle replied, accepting Katherine's kiss and hug, before the woman turned her attention onto her boyfriend.

"How are you feeling, honey?" her Mom asked Patrick, lifting a hand to his arm, while she gazed questioningly at the young man who was taller than her.

"I'm fine," Patrick laughed, as parents were truly something he had no clue how to 'properly' interact with. Though, if he was honest with himself, he was more comfortable around Bryan and Katherine than Angela and James.

"Well, dinner will be ready in about an hour," Katherine said, lowering her hand from his arm, in order to flick her gaze over both he and her daughter. "So, I hope you're hungry."

"Where's Dad?" inquired Belle, her brow furrowing, while she shot a quick look around what of the house she could see in the foyer.

"Some meeting Sheriff Bowers called for with the men in town," answered Katherine, rolling her eyes. "They're all excited to have something to hunt."

Belle couldn't help but sigh softly. She should've known her bear story would rally the males in town to get their guns and go kill what they would most likely blame for all of the missing children. But, if there **was** a bear out there, perhaps it would do the town a favor, and get rid of a few of the more useless ones, such as Henry's Father.

"Where's Bill?" Belle asked next, but Katherine didn't need to answer her this time.

"I'm here," came the response from Bill himself, and all three looked up to see him at the top of the stairs, gazing down at them, a hand on the railing.

Belle sent her little brother a soft smile. This was what she was not looking forward to in bringing Patrick home. He **did** torment Bill and

his friends, after all.

"I'm going to take a shower," Patrick spoke up, as he still wore his hospital attire, and hadn't properly bathed since before the sewer incident, just received a bit of a sponge bath while he'd been asleep.

"Okay," replied Belle, offering him a smile, an action he returned, before he leaned over, pressing a lingering kiss to her forehead, then pulling back, and starting to climb the stairs, a task made easy by his long legs.

She watched he and Bill pass one another, exchanging a glance, as her little brother came down the steps, at the same time Patrick went up them.

"I'll be in the kitchen if anyone needs anything," said Katherine, offering her children a soft smile, before turning, and heading back down the hallway. She, as had Patrick, could tell the two needed some time alone.

"Okay, Mom," replied Belle, returning her Mom's gesture, then shifting her gaze back onto Bill, when he reached the bottom step.

She extended a slender limb to her little brother, who took it, causing a wave of relief to wash over her, before she used to hold to guide him into the living room.

"So, on a scale of one to ten, how mad at me are you?" Belle asked, turning to face Bill, her beautiful face adorably contorted into a worried expression.

"I'm not m-m-mad at you, Belle," laughed her little brother in response.

"You're not?" Belle inquired, her dark brow furrowing in confusion and disbelief.

"If you'd brought Bowers home, or even Belch or Victor, I would be," Bill went on. "But Patrick's different. You know that. Besides, I'm the o-o-one who t-tried to t-talk to him while you were-were gone, re-re-remember?"

Belle released a breath of relief, falling into a crouch in front of him, where she took up both of his hands with her own, sending him a smile of gratitude. "Right. I'm sorry, love. With everything that's been going on, I forgot you told me that."

"It's okay, Belle," replied Bill, before his handsome little face took on a questioning expression. "But, can you p-p-promise me something?"

"Yes, of course," Belle answered, giving his arms a bit of a playful swing. "Anything."

"The guys and I are g-g-going to the Q-Quarry tomorrow," Bill explained. "Would you c-c-come with us?"

"Of course, sweetheart," responded Belle, a bright smile lighting up her beautiful face at the thought of spending time with the boys. "I'd love nothing more."

"G-G-Good," stuttered Bill. "'Cause we m-m-m-miss you."

"I know, love," Belle sighed in response. "I miss you lot too." Quirking her brow, she went on. "Just give me tonight with my boyfriend, and I promise I'll spend the whole day with you and the others tomorrow."

"Deal," Bill said, before his own brow raised, when he noticed something particular she'd said. "So, he-he's your b-b-boyfriend again, huh?"

Belle couldn't help but blush softly, averting her gaze to the floor, where she took her lush bottom lip between her perfect straight white teeth, before looking back up at her little brother. "Yes, I believe he is."

"G-G-Good," replied Bill, smiling at his sister's response. "He's b-better with you, Ellie."

Belle smiled softly in response, merely nodding, before she lifted her arms, in order to wrap them around her little brother, whom she pulled into a hug, a gesture he immediately returned, before she turned her head to press a sweet kiss into his hair.

While Patrick showered, Belle and Bill helped Katherine in the kitchen, and Bryan arrived home just as Patrick got out of the bath. The two greeted one another with a handshake, and Bryan told Patrick he was glad he was all right, before they all settled in for dinner.

After, it was Belle's turn for a shower. Upon getting out, she brushed and dried her endless tresses, which returned to their usual lushly curled state, and pinned a few back at her right temple; as she had the day of her and Patrick's encounter with It in the sewers; then got dressed in a fresh black lace bra and panties set, a white t-shirt with black graphic design that was, like most tops, a little too big on her, perfectly fitted black leggings, and thick oversized cashmere socks, that went up to just below her calves, as her feet, no matter the weather, always adorably got cold.

She also put her rings back on, as well as her necklaces, then made her way into her room, where she found Patrick waiting for her.

Since he'd showered earlier than her, he was fully dressed, now wearing a white henley, a fresh pair of jeans, and his boots, along with underwear, socks, the multiple black bracelets on his right wrist, and his own rings.

Patrick sat on her bed, long legs parted, leaning back, his arms extended behind him, so that he could rest his weight on them, and his trademark smirk alit his handsome face at the sight of Belle.

"I have something for you," she said to him, as she remembered her shopping trip from that morning, and turned to face her closet, which, unfortunately, brought her face to face with the group of balloons her friends had brought over her first night back in town, which still weren't showing any signs of deflation, despite it having been a few days, and the sight of them caused the smile that had broke out across her own beautiful visage to quickly die.

"Oh, yeah?" Patrick asked, sitting up, where his brow furrowed, and his own happiness faded, when he saw the pause the balloons gave her. Something he could understand, as the last thing he saw before the Clown, mouth coated in his own blood, tried to make its final launch on him in the sewers, which was when Belle came to his

rescue, was a red balloon with "I Derry" on it. "Belle?"

She snapped out of it at the sound of her boyfriend speaking her name, and reached past the balloons, which she was tempted to pop, one at a time, with a hair pin, but she knew, in a house with two ex-Military parents, that'd be a bad idea, in order to open up her closet, where she reached a somewhat large shopping bag.

Belle closed her closet door, then turned, and walked over to where Patrick sat on the edge of her bed, offering it to him with a smile.

"What'd you get me?" Patrick inquired next, with a slight uncertain, but amused smile, as he took the bag from her with one hand.

"Just a couple of things I thought you'd need," Belle shrugged, watching while he placed the item on the floor, then folded his long, lanky form in half in order to bend down, and reach into it.

A bright smile lit up her beautiful face, when Patrick pulled out the brand new yellow, red collar and sleeve trimmed, Tom of Tom & Jerry t-shirt, his previous one having been ruined in the sewers, and lifted a widening smirk to her, his blue eyes sparkling.

"Really?" he asked, before shifting his attention back down onto the item of clothing, feeling the soft brand new material between his fingers.

"I know it was one of your favorites," Belle replied, and she wasn't wrong. For whatever reason, he *did* love that stupid shirt.

"Thanks, Princess," Patrick said, throwing the item of clothing over one lean shoulder, then getting to his feet, his large hands going to her waist, and she smiled softly, her own delicate limbs coming to rest on his biceps, as he leaned in, pressing a sweet little kiss to, for the first time in almost a year, her lips.

It was a bit of an uncertain reaction. It wasn't as though they'd talked about whether or not they were really back together. It was just kind of assumed after what they'd been through the previous day in the sewers. But, both knew it was absolutely, 100% the case. They were boyfriend and girlfriend once more, and anything that came next

they would face as such.

And so, Belle didn't hesitate in the slightest when it came to returning the kiss, which only lasted a few seconds, and was relatively chaste. They'd have plenty of time later for everything else, after all.

"You're welcome," answered Belle, as the two pulled apart, before she nodded back down at the bag, taking in a bit of a deep breath, while she moved a hand from his bicep, in order to tuck some of her endless chocolate tresses back behind her ear. "There's something else in there."

Patrick too flicked a glance at the shopping item, his brow quirked in interest, but he nonetheless sat back down on the bed, and reached into the bag, long fingers searching for the second time she spoke up, while she moved over to sit beside him on the bed.

His brow furrowed, when his searching digits closed around the other gift, and he turned his wavy raven hued head to gaze into Belle's beautiful face, his own handsome face etched in confusion and disbelief, as he sat up, pulling the item free, while he did so. It was a brand new can of hair spray.

"I used yours up in the sewers," she explained, before she turned at the waist, and grabbed an item off of her nightstand, which was revealed to be his lighter, once she shifted to face him once more. "I also refilled this. It was pretty low."

Patrick took the lighter from her, and gazed down at the two items in his hands, his brow remaining furrowed, as he tried to figure out why she was giving these to him. He soon, upon being unable to decipher it, shook his head, and turned a confused gaze onto her. "Why?"

"Because they're yours," Belle answered, shrugging her slender shoulders. "I don't have any right to get rid of them."

Patrick licked his lips, looking away from her, in order to gaze across the room, where his eyes fell upon her dresser. While she'd been in the shower, he'd unpacked the drugs Dr. Cullen had given him. There was one for pain, one for sleep, and some type of cream to be put on the cuts on his face, to help speed up healing, as well as prevent

infection.

He'd placed them on Belle's dresser, which was when he'd seen her own group of medications, in their orange bottles with the white labels and caps that looked so out of place in her soft, feminine room, and anger had swept through him at the knowledge she had to choke down all of those pills because no one believed her, not even him.

Patrick obviously didn't have all of the information, as they'd yet to talk about it, but he just knew the incident in the Sewers the day before had not been Belle's first encounter with the Clown, and he had a feeling it had something to do with Georgie's death, then her subsequent breakdown, causing her to have to go to England for almost a year. And here she was, giving him back the items that he used to torment people. But, truthfully, he knew why.

During his life, Patrick had lost count of the number of people who'd tried to change him, who told him he wasn't normal, he wasn't right, and he needed to be fixed. But then there was Belle, who, despite everything, never told him he needed to be anything but who he was, and she never tried to change him, which she was still not doing, by giving him back his lighter, and a new can of hair spray. It was his choice to use those things, and what to use them for, as always.

"I need to tell you something," Patrick said, licking his lips, while he turned his head back to face her, but didn't look at her with his eyes, until he fell silent. "It's why I was in the fucking sewers yesterday."

Sighing, Belle gently shook her endless lushly curled head. "You don't need to. I already know. About Ben Hanscom."

"What?" Patrick asked, sitting up, as he'd been hunched over the entire time, arms hanging off his thighs. "How?"

"I'd met him earlier," explained Belle, before it was her turn to lick her lips. "And, when I came home from the hospital, he was here. When he ran from you and the others, he came across Bill and his friends. They took care of him. Ben told me what happened last night."

"Adopted another Loser, I see," Patrick sighed, getting to his feet, and

taking a couple of long strides away from her. As with the first night she'd been back, when he'd climbed through her window, he needed to space himself from her. He only ever felt guilty about the things he'd done when it came to her, because she was too fucking good for him, deserved so much better than his crazy ass.

"Patrick," Belle replied, wanting to get up and go to him, but she knew this routine by heart. She knew what was going on when he'd physically distance himself from her. "I know you didn't really do anything to Ben. It was mostly Henry, as usual."

"But I liked it," Patrick said, turning to face her. "What he did to Tits."

"Yes, he told me that," sighed Belle, going on when her boyfriend gazed curiously at her. "Henry. That's one of the things he said to me when I met him outside the hospital this morning."

"What else did he say?" asked Patrick, his brow furrowing, while anger towards Bowers rose up in him, something she could physically see, as his chest began to rise and fall faster, to make up for the heavy breaths he was taking. "***What else did he say?***"

Belle physically jumped at that. Not because she was afraid of him. Despite everything, she had never been afraid of him, and he had never hurt her. Again, aside from all of the rumors and talking behind their backs that he did, things she knew even one of her best friends, Caroline, took part in.

She got to her feet, and quickly brushed past him, as she realized her bedroom door was open, but she closed it as quietly as she could, then moved back, to stand in front of Patrick, who seemed cemented into the spot where he stood.

"It doesn't matter what else he said," Belle spoke up, slowly lifting her slender limbs to rest on either side of his heaving chest. His skin was red hot to the touch, from all of the emotions raging through him. "I don't care."

"Just tell me, Princess," replied Patrick, her touch, as always, like a soothing balm to his very soul, even though, at first, it was like someone putting their hands on you right after a really bad sunburn.

Belle sighed softly, licking her lips, before answering. "He said that you enjoyed it, that you. . . got off on it. And that. . . that wasn't all you liked."

Patrick lifted one of his large hands, and ran it down the length of his handsome face.

"Fuck," he muttered against the limb, as he brushed past Belle, who turned to follow him with her eyes, and he soon came to a halt by her desk, his back to her. "Do you want to know?"

Truthfully, she already did. Or, at least, had an idea. Patrick wasn't exactly what you'd call a vanilla guy. Though, again, he had never hurt her, and anything that would be considered "rough" she completely consented to, and enjoyed, but that was because it was him. She knew it wouldn't be the same with anyone else. And, that was just the thing, she didn't want anyone else. Ever. For the rest of her life.

"Yes," Belle said, forgoing her usual, 'If you want to tell me.', as she knew, if they were going to be together again, she needed to hear what had happened with him while she'd been gone, and, if she had anything to tell him, she would, but she'd been so caught up in her grief and trying to recover, she hadn't had time to think about boys, or girls, not that she didn't have plenty of offers, and, once she was feeling well enough to, she *did* make a few friends, and hang out with people.

She watched Patrick's lean shoulders tense up at her single spoken word, so she walked over to her bed, and sat down on it, bringing her legs up in front of her, which she crossed Indian style, while continuing to gaze at him with her rich dark chocolate hued eyes, allowing him to speak when he was ready.

"I didn't. . . I didn't fuck anybody while you were gone," Patrick began after a moment, flicking a glance over at her. "I didn't want any girl but you. I never will." Laughing softly, he bit his bottom lip, before going on. "You screwed me there, Denbrough."

Belle couldn't help but smile gently at his words, especially since she could say the same thing about him.

"But. . . " Patrick went on, averting his gaze from hers. "The need was still there. And. . . so was Henry."

Belle's brow furrowed a bit at his words, but it soon smoothed out, as realization hit, and all of the things Bowers has been saying to her since her first day back finally made sense.

"So, you and Henry-" she began, but he swiftly cut her off.

"We didn't fuck," Patrick said, quickly turning his eyes back onto her. "I told you, he was just entertainment. It was only handjobs and that."

Belle nodded in understanding, slowly licking her lips. She knew she should be repulsed. She could even already hear the rant Caroline would go on if she ever found out. But she wasn't. And, truthfully, she also wasn't surprised. Maybe if Henry hadn't been dropping all those hints for days now, she would be, but it didn't matter to her either way. She knew it had just been sex.

"I was so fucking lost without you, baby," went on Patrick, with a gentle shake of his wavy raven hued head. "At least when you're here, when you're with me, all the noise is bearable. I'd be fucking lying if I said you weren't the single most beautiful fucking thing I'd ever seen when you showed up at school the other day. Even in that henley, baggy pants, and those fucking old Converse you love so much, I'd never seen anything more breathtaking."

Belle smiled softly at his words, her heart fluttering with joy and love, even while the life giving organ ached at him talking about the 'noise'. It was something she'd heard from him before, he had various terms for "whatever the fuck was wrong" with him, but she'd never really thought about it, though now she had experience with her own mental illness. Maybe now she could help him, if he wanted it. Again, she didn't believe he needed to change, she just didn't want him to suffer, if that was truly the case. That was a conversation for another night though.

Belle moved onto all fours, and crawled across her bed's surface, to its end, which was closest to her desk, where Patrick currently stood, then got to her knees, reaching out to place one hand on his nearest shoulder, while the other cupped the furthest side of his face, before

she leaned in, and pressed a kiss to his cheek.

Using the hand on his visage, she gently urged him to turn to face her, even as she stretched a bit in order to kiss the area close to his mouth, and, thankfully, he did as she silently asked, shifting his head to look at her, which was when she captured his lips with her own in a kiss.

After that, it didn't take long for the rest of his tall, lanky body to turn, where his hands lifted to grasp either side of her small waist through the material of her somewhat oversized t-shirt, while his lips quickly parted against her own to deepen the action.

Their arms soon wound around one another, with one of Belle's going about his lean shoulders, while the other tangled in his wavy raven tresses, and both of his merely locked into place around her slender torso, the feeling of her endless lush chocolate curls tickling and rubbing across the bare skin of his limbs sending warmth and pleasurable tingles throughout all parts of him.

Patrick bit down on her lush bottom lip, and used the opportunity, when she gasped in delight, to glide his hot, velvety tongue into the warm, sweet cavern of her mouth, where he began to explore every inch, while she pulled him to her as much as she could, since his legs were now pushed against the end of her bed, pressing her soft chest into his hard lean muscled one.

Belle could feel the hot sting of fresh tears pricking at her closed orbs, even while she began to let herself get lost in his arms, in his touch, in the feeling of his talented mouth connected with her own in a fiercely passionate kiss that was swiftly leaving her breathless, and which she returned emotion for emotion, action for action.

"I'm so sorry," she gasped out, as she pulled back long enough to take in breath. "I'm so sorry I left you."

Patrick kissed her again, but then broke the connection himself in order to look at her, his heated gaze meeting her own, though hers was also gleaming with tears. "Tell me. Tell me what happened."

"No," Belle choked, with a gentle shake of her head. "No, I can't."

He kissed her once more, one hand still clutching at her waist, while the other lifted to gently touch a side of her beautiful face with the backs of his long fingers, as tears began sliding free.

"Please, baby," Patrick pleaded, soon moving his mouth to lovingly brush away the wetness on her soft, milky white skin with it. "Please tell me. I can't fucking stand to see you like this. All those drugs over there, to think you have to choke them down." It was his turn to gently shake his head, as he leaned down, in order to bury it into her slender neck, where his hot breath ghosted across her flesh, causing a shiver to run through her spine. "No, not my girl. She doesn't need all of that bullshit."

Belle whimpered softly, when she felt him press a kiss to the spot where her shoulder met her throat, and the action was followed by a light graze of his teeth, which sent fresh shock waves of passion throughout her body. All she wanted to do, especially when he started trailing his mouth upward, soon coming to rest on her pulse point, where he began to suckle, while one of his hands moved to grasp the other side of her neck, was let herself continue to lose herself in him. Just let him lay her down on the bed, and make love to her in all of his special, talented ways.

"It was the Clown, wasn't it?" Patrick asked, lifting his head from where it'd been bowed, in order to look into her eyes once more, the thumb of the hand that had been at her throat now brushing across her lush, somewhat swollen from their kisses, lips. "He did this to you, didn't he?"

"It's not a 'he', Patrick," replied Belle, with a gentle sigh. "It's an It, a thing, some horrible creature that kills children." Sniffling, she couldn't help the fresh sheen of tears from rising up in her chocolate orbs. "And It killed *my* Georgie. That day, he went out to race a boat that Bill had made him, and he wanted me to go with him, but I let my Mom's nagging of me to finish that foolish Harvard letter prevent me from going."

Patrick had never seen her the way he was now. He'd never really seen her cry, he'd never really seen her upset. She was always so full of joy and love, like a literal ray of the brightest, warmest sunshine sent down to Earth to take care of all of the poor, unfortunate,

damned souls, like him. But here she was, crumbling like a house of playing cards, in his arms, and he both wanted to strangle the life out of something, and just hold her for the rest of their lives, never letting anything come near her again, or he'd kill whatever did, make it suffer in ways it never dreamed off, for **daring** to hurt her, **his** Belle.

"My Mom and I got into a fight, and I left to go find Georgie," Belle went on, her arm tightening around his shoulders, as did the hand in his hair, and he instinctively strengthen his own grip on her, from the limb still at her waist, to the one cradling her cheek, jaw, and the side of her neck. "He was crouched by a storm drain, and I was overwhelmed with this feeling of dread. I didn't know why, but I knew I **had** to get him away from there. I called out to him, and. . . and then. . . And then then his arm was just gone! He fell back, so I ran to him. He was bleeding everywhere. I held him, but then I looked up, and I saw It. I saw the Clown. It was in the storm drain, Its mouth was covered in blood, in Georgie's blood. I held onto him tight, but it didn't matter. It took him, Patrick. It took Georgie, **my** Georgie, right from my arms, while he screamed for me and Bill."

She completely broke down at that, unable to form another word, and Patrick quickly gathered her fully into his arms. He secured the one around her slender waist once more, while the other moved from the side of her beautiful, tear stained face, in favor of lovingly cradling the back of her silky head with it, as her own delicate limbs wrapped about his neck, clutching at the material of his white henley, while she sobbed into his shoulder.

"It's okay, baby," he said, every inch of him, mind, body, heart, and soul, absolutely vibrating from the pain he could literally feel coming off of her in waves. God, he loved her so damn much, and he silently vowed then and there to bring a whole new level of suffering to whatever hurt her, namely that fucking Clown. Had she told him about It before he had his own encounter with It, he still would've believed her, he trusted her, **only** her, but having seen and suffered at Its hands himself defiantly helped. "It's okay. I believe you. I believe you."

Belle choked out a fresh sob at Patrick's words. Hearing someone, especially him, say he believed her, was the one thing she'd been

waiting almost a year to experience. Even her Uncle in England, who'd helped her recover, and trained her to protect herself and others, provided her with a weapon to kill her monster, had never out right told her he believed her, just that he trusted her, and therefor that what she was saying to be real indeed was.

"I'm going to help you," Patrick went on, tightening his hold even further on her. "We'll kill that fucking thing together. I promise." Releasing a shaky breath, he turned his head, and pressed a trembling kiss into her hair, before going back to simply embracing her. "I love you so much."

Smiling softly, even through her tears, Belle mimicked his actions, shifting her beautiful face sideways, in order to brush her lips against his cheek, then she too returned to hugging him, and the pair had no idea how long they were like that, just holding one another, the rest of the World melting away, leaving only them.

- Author's Note - Well, there you have it! Again, I was going to make it longer, but, once I got to the end of the last bit, it just felt like the best place to stop for this Chapter. I promise there'll be plenty more Belle and Patrick to come, some of which was plenty hinted at in this Chapter. ;)

Anyway, with that, I hope you all enjoyed it, and, as always, please, please, please review! :)

8. The Quarry

- Author's Note - Hello, loves! You all are amazing! Thank you **so** much to those who reviewed! I'm going to start responding to each of you individually at the beginning of the Chapters. So, here we go with that. . .

- **chelsnichole12** - Thank you, love! I'm so happy to hear you're still enjoying the story!

- **MedievalWarriorPrincess** - Sweetie, I don't even know what to say to you. That I already haven't in our texts, at least. ;) I can always count on you to be my number one fan, even in a fandom you're not a part of!

- **Nirvana14** - Wow! Thank you so much, love! That means a lot to me! Especially since I was really nervous about the first Belle/Patrick centered Chapter.

- **spiritgirl16** - Aw! You're so sweet! I had a lot of fun writing Belle and Patrick being a couple for the first time, even if I was a bit nervous about it, especially with Patrick being as complex a character as he is. And, as always, I loved doing stuff between Belle and Bill! Even though it's a long ways off, I do have a good portion of the final showdown with Pennywise planned out. IT is defiantly, dare I say, fascinated by Belle. She's the first person to come across IT and walk away alive, now not only one, but twice, and the second time she was able to take Patrick with her. So, Pennywise defiantly has ITs work cut out for It when it comes to her. Like you said, she's a badass. And, don't worry, there will be plenty more badass Belle moments to come. ;) As for where Patrick's concerned with Henry's gang, you'll just have to wait and see. ;)

- **SpellSlaughterWithoutLaughter** - Yes, that had to be done if Belle and Patrick are to move forward with their relationship, which, as you can see, they are, and I have plenty more planned for it. ;)

- **DaughterofJerusalem** - Hey, love! I'm so happy to see you back in the review section, amazing me with your words, just as you did last time! I'm so glad you love Belle and Patrick's relationship so much. I

do too! The main thing I want to do with it is show that two people with mental illnesses can be happy and in love, and live relatively normal lives together. Even though Belle's breakdown was caused by very real events, she still suffers from it, and Patrick has his own issues. If you're a fan of the book, you have an idea of what those are, but, if you're not, don't worry, we'll get to them in the story. But, despite it all, Belle and Patrick love each other more than anything, and will fight to the death for one another, and their relationship, which will only get deeper as we go along.

- **yuki1706** - Greetings, love! Welcome to my story! I'm so glad you're enjoying it and love the character of Belle. I do believe she's my favorite Original Character that I have written so far.

- **LoveFiction2017** - Have no fear, love! Patrick's "relationship" with Henry was just for fun. Patrick's a very complex character, and, like he said to Belle, Henry and the others are just a means of entertainment for him. Belle is literally the only person in the entire World that he cares about and loves. I was very careful to use kind of crude words when Patrick was talking about what happened between he and Henry, and how he couldn't bring himself to be with any other girls, but use more romantic phrasing when addressing Patrick and Belle. They love each other, so sex always means something to them, they're "making love". But what Patrick did with Henry was just that, just sex. It didn't mean anything to either of them, especially Patrick, and it obviously won't be continuing now that he and Belle are back together. I hope that made sense!

- **Ahlysab** - Aw! Thanks, love! I love Belle and Patrick's relationship so much too!

- **walisi** - Welcome to the story, love! And, don't worry, Belle will have plenty of interaction with every member of the Losers Club. Another reason why time needs to go slower in the story, as opposed to how it transpires in the movie.

- **Winchestergirl123** - Aw! No worries, love! Better late than never. And I'm so glad to hear you enjoyed the Chapter!

All right! I hope I answered everyone's questions, as well as addressed everything I could without going too far into what'll be coming in the

story. Here's the next Chapter, I hope you all enjoy, and, as always, **PLEASE** review!

Since it wasn't that late, and the sun hadn't even fully set yet, Belle and Patrick decided to go for a walk, mainly to get out of the house, take in some fresh air.

It was nice. The weather had cooled down from the typical warm Summer temperatures that dominated during the day, and there was a beautiful orange and pink sunset taking place in front of the pair as they went, hand in hand, his long fingers and her own slender ones entwined, while the lights on people's porches, as well as those tall lanterns that lined the street, were just coming on.

"Remember when we used to Trick or Treat?" asked Patrick, with his trademark smirk, which he soon turned down onto Belle's beautiful face, and she was able to tell his blue eyes were sparkling, even in the dimming evening light. "We had it down to a science."

She couldn't help but smile softly, both at the amused look on his handsome visage, as well as the happy memories his words brought back. "I remember. I was always the bag lady, stuffing all of your costumes into my garbage bag."

"I swear, we hit the Stevens house seven times that one year," Patrick went on, laughing, as he lifted his free hand to indicate the house of the mentioned family, when they passed by it.

"Caroline called us the little Bonnie and Clyde of Derry," replied Belle, raising her own unoccupied limb to tuck some of her endless chocolate curls back behind one ear, while she momentarily averted her gaze to the street they were walking on. "Everyone thought we were so cute." Lifting her rich brown eyes back to him, she continued. "Now we're just two psychos in love."

Patrick's smile dimmed a bit, and he released his hold on her hand, in favor wrapping the long lean arm around her slender shoulders, then use the grasp to hug her against his side. "Just one psycho." Leaning over, he pressed a kiss to the side of her head. "And the beautiful girl stupid enough to love him."

Belle sent him a playful look at that, but nonetheless relented, looping her own delicate limb about his waist from behind, then laying her head down on the top of his chest, which he responded to by wrapping his other arm around her, an action she mimicked with hers, and they walked like that for a few moments, in a comfortable silence, until she caught sight of something that they were approaching.

Without realizing it, her feet, which she had pulled a pair of boots onto, brought her to a halt, which, in turn, ceased Patrick from going any further as well.

"What is it?" he asked, while he turned a concerned and confused gaze down onto her beautiful face.

"That's where it happened," Belle explained, nodding at the sewer drain several feet from where they now stood, on the corner of Witcham and Jackson, next to the house of the elderly Mrs. Sterling. "That's where It killed Georgie."

Patrick followed her gesture, his gaze falling upon where she indicated, which was when his brow smoothed out in understanding. "Is this the first time you've been back here?"

"No," Belle replied, with a gentle shake of her head. "I came by yesterday morning, before I went into town."

"Come on," Patrick said, taking up her slender hand once more with his own large one, then using the hold to gently urge her with him, while he started striding toward the sewer drain, a task, as always, made easy by his long legs.

Once they got within a few feet, he released his hold on her hand, and moved closer to the opening in the street by himself, while she stood back, her arms crossed over her chest, as an unexplainable chill washed over her at being back by where she'd lost her little brother, despite her having been there the day before.

Patrick got down on one knee by the sewer drain, placing a hand on its concrete top, and gazed into the dark hole, eyes scanning what of inside he could see, with the only light provided being that of the

setting sun.

Belle's heart skipped a beat, as her mind flashed back to that day, to the scene she came upon, of Georgie crouched by the storm run off, before he suddenly had his arm bitten off, and, not even a moment later, was literally torn from her by the unnaturally long Clown arm stretching out from the hole.

"No!" she exclaimed, rushing forward, and grabbing a hold of whatever of her boyfriend she could, pulling him back while she clutched at his arm and the fabric of his white henley. "Don't! It'll get you! Please, Patrick, don't! It'll take you from me too!"

Patrick immediately shifted his attention back onto Belle, as she urged him away from the sewer drain. Straightening up, he turned to face her, his own heart aching at the pain and fear so evident on her beautiful face, and he quickly reached out to wrap his arms around her, gently, but firmly, drawing her to him.

"Okay," he said, as he locked one arm around her, while the other lifted to lovingly cradle the back of her silky head. "It's okay, Belle. It's okay. I'm sorry. I won't go near it again. It's all right. I'm here. I've got you, baby."

Breathing a sigh of relief, an emotion her slender form also sagged with, Belle lifted her own slender limbs, and wrapped them around Patrick's lean muscled torso, laying her forearms and hands up the length of his back, where she lightly held onto the material of his top once more.

Closing her eyes, she took in one deep breath after another of his familiar, soothing scent, soaking up the comfort and warmth his presence, and the feeling of being held securely in his arms, brought her. Slowly, but surely, her heart rate returned to normal, and her intake of air became less shuddered.

"Shh," Patrick soothed, turning his head to press a kiss to the side of hers, while his own relief at her calming down flooded him. "It's all right, Princess. It's all right. Shh."

"Belle?" came a familiar, kind hearted voice to their right, causing the

two to break apart enough so that they could look over to see who it belonged to: Mrs. Sterling.

She stood on her porch, just like she had the day Georgie had been killed, but, this time was smiling down at the pair of teenagers.

"Hi, Mrs. Sterling," Belle called in return, as she unwound her arms from around Patrick, in order to lift them to her beautiful face, and wipe away the light sheen of tears that had risen up in her chocolate brown orbs.

"I didn't know you were back in Derry!" exclaimed Mrs. Sterling, a bright smile lighting up her wrinkled face, before she waved a hand at them in her direction, while she began down the steps of her patio. "Bring that sweet face of yours over here and let me kiss it!"

Smiling softly, Belle exchanged a look with Patrick, before brushing past him. She did a wide circle around the storm drain, then went up the path of the front yard, in order to meet the elderly woman.

Mrs. Sterling reached out, cupping the teenager's beautiful young visage in her hands, then pressing a kiss to her cheek, before pulling her into a hug, which Belle returned, while Patrick trailed slowly after her, truthfully in no hurry to get close to the elderly woman.

"How are you, honey?" Mrs. Sterling asked, when the two parted from their embrace, allowing the older one to cradle the teenager's face in her limbs once more.

"I'm good, Mrs. Sterling," Belle replied, offering the elderly woman a soft smile. "Thank you."

She flicked a glance at Patrick, a sight that caused her brilliant look of happiness to dim slightly, though not completely disappear, and she moved a hand to Belle's back, then lifted the other to gesture the teenage boy forward. "Well, come on in, both of you."

"Shouldn't we be going?" Patrick asked, standing at the end of the front yard path, his hands tucked into the back pockets of his jeans, while he offered his girlfriend a slight smirk.

"Well, it's still early," Belle replied, flicking a glance at him, before

returning her eyes to Mrs. Sterling. "We'd love to."

The elderly woman smiled happily in response, and moved to head back inside, while Belle walked over to where her boyfriend stood, fetching one of his hands from his denims, and sending him a somewhat pleading look.

"Come on," she said. "It'll be fine. For me? Please."

Patrick sighed softly, allowing Belle to pull his large limb free, then entwined the long digits of it with her own slender ones, and used the hold to guide him after Mrs. Sterling, causing his girlfriend to smile in triumph.

Once Belle and Patrick entered the house, which was a stereotypical home of an elderly woman, Mrs. Sterling shut the front door behind them.

"Now we're trapped," Patrick said to Belle, who playfully swatted him in the chest, before turning a fresh sweet smile onto the older woman.

"Well, why don't you two make yourselves comfortable in the living room, and I'll make us something to drink," Mrs. Sterling said, gesturing to the right, where the mentioned area was. "How about some tea?"

"It's a hundred degrees out," spoke Patrick, earning a fresh look from his girlfriend.

"We'd love some tea, Ma'am," Belle said to Mrs. Sterling, who smiled in response, then headed off toward the kitchen.

"Really?" Belle asked, turning to face her boyfriend, even though she was unable to help her own brilliant look of happiness at his actions.

"What? I don't like old people," replied Patrick, with a shrug of his lean shoulders.

"You don't like anybody," Belle pointed out with a laugh.

"I like **you**," answered Patrick, quirking his brow, as he splayed his free hand across her flat taut stomach through the material of her oversized t-shirt.

"Well, that's good," Belle giggled in response. "Please try to behave yourself. She's a nice old lady, and she was there for me after Georgie."

Patrick's expression took on a hint of seriousness at that, and he licked his lips, before gently nodding his wavy raven hued head.

"Thank you," Belle replied, leaning up on her toes to give him a quick kiss, while she lifted her own free hand to cup a side of his face, before settling back down on her feet, and leading her boyfriend into the living room.

A little while later, after their visit with Mrs. Sterling, Belle and Patrick were back in the former's room at her family's house, and, as Patrick shed his boots and jeans, in favor of a pair of black sweatpants, Belle sat on the side of her bed, answering texts messages from her friends, in addition to going through her e-mails.

She felt the mattress shift when her tall, lanky boyfriend climbed onto it, now dressed for sleep, and came up behind her, immediately lifting a large hand to move the hair back from her neck, where he began placing light kisses with his lips, actions that sent a delightful tingling warmth throughout her slender form, beginning from the points of contact, while he placed a long leg on either side of both of hers, hanging off of the side of the bed, soon settling his limbs at her waist, while he gazed over her shoulder at her phone.

"Anything interesting?" Patrick inquired, his thumbs absently rubbing either side of her torso through the material of her shirt.

"No," Belle said, taking in a deep breath, before releasing it. "Some more modeling jobs, ballet offers. Even a few interested in my photographs."

She'd been modeling for several years, going from a beautiful little girl to a stunning young woman, all while with her endless lush

chocolate tresses, and it was how she had so much of her own money, though her parents naturally controlled it until she turned 18. She'd also been doing Ballet for most of her life.

"But I'm not doing anything this Summer, except be with the people I love," Belle went on, clicking off her phone, then placing it on the nightstand next to Patrick's, before she shifted in her position, in order to turn sideways, lifting her legs up, so that she could lay them over one of Patrick's thighs, and he instantly moved a hand from her waist to gently grasp them.

"What did you see?" she asked after a moment, going on when he lifted a curious gaze from where he'd begun absently playing with one of her slender hands. "In the Sewers yesterday."

"You mean, aside from the giant fucking Clown covered in my blood?" inquired Patrick, to which Belle nodded, earning a soft sigh from him. "I don't know what they were. You saw them too. Fucking Zombies or something. I was looking for Tits, and I heard a noise coming from inside the sewer, so I went in, thinking it was him. Then I heard these whispers, people saying my name, telling me I'd found them, so I lit up the tunnel, and that's when I saw them. One of them took a bite out of my face, but I managed to push it away, then I ran, and, the next thing I know, there's that fucking Clown." Smiling, he shifted his eyes back onto her beautiful face, raising his hand still at her waist, in order to lovingly brush her cheek with the backs of his long fingers. "Then there was you."

Smiling sweetly herself, Belle wrapped one arm around his lean shoulders, and lifted the other to cup one side of his handsome, cut adorned face, which she instinctively began stroking with her delicate fingers.

"What were you doing in the Sewers, anyway?" Patrick asked next, as his brow furrowed in realization and confusion.

"I was out, taking pictures with my new equipment," Belle explained. "Bill and the others were nearby, so I was making my way to them. I saw a cardinal, and I got up on a well to get a better view of you."

Climbing from his lap, she padded over to her desk, fetching the

camera she'd had with her the previous day off of its surface, while she continued. "Then this hand shot out from the well, and grabbed my leg. I fell back, but I'd pressed down on the shutter, so, when I recovered, I looked to see what had got me."

Finding the blurred image of a bloody, terrified Patrick on her camera, she walked back to where he still sat on the side of her bed, and held the item out to him. "This is what I saw."

With his brow still furrowed, Patrick took the camera from her, gazing down at the screen on it, which was when his expression smoothed out from one of confusion, to one of surprise and horror.

"That's me," he breathed.

"That's what I thought too," Belle replied, taking up a place beside him, where she lifted one leg to rest, bent at the knee, in front of her. "And that's why I went into the Sewers. I was terrified that It, that the Clown, had gotten you too."

"It's not me though," Patrick said, looking over at her, a smirk tugging at the corners of his lips. "I mean, I never saw you until you lit up the clown like the Fourth of fucking July."

Belle couldn't help but smile softly at his words, before she spoke up again. "I know. I realized that once I found you. It was the Clown all along, luring me into the Sewers at the same time it was trying to kill you."

"Jesus," Patrick sighed, lifting his free hand to rub it down the length of his handsome face, while he handed her back her camera. "What did you see? Did you just see the Clown? And what you thought was me?"

"No," Belle said. "I saw. . . " Pausing, she licked her lips, as she averted her gaze down onto the item in her delicate limbs.

Patrick reached over, taking her chin between his thumb and forefinger, then using the hold to lift her eyes back to his. "What, baby?"

"Georgie," she admitted, causing realization to dawn across his

handsome face. "I saw Georgie. Some other kids, probably the ones missing. I saw the Zombies too. And bugs. Spiders, snakes, cockroaches, centipedes. There were so many of them, it looked like the walls of the sewers were moving. I screamed for it to stop, and that's when I saw the Clown. I asked it what it'd done with you, and it showed me your lighter and the hair spray. That's how I got a hold of those."

"So, this thing, whatever It is, can make us see what It wants us to see?" Patrick asked, with a gentle shake of his wavy raven hued head.

"I don't know," Belle sighed, shrugging her shoulders slightly. "I guess. To be honest, I still don't know that much about It. When I was in England, after I got better, I tried looking It up, but I was never able to find anything about It. I assume, if there's anything to be found out about It, where It came from, what It can do, how to kill It, it'll be here, in Derry. That's how I met Ben. I went to the library yesterday morning, to start my research."

"Well, we know it doesn't like fire," said Patrick, with a playful wiggle of his eyebrows, as he thought back once more to her lighting the Clown up with his lighter and hair spray in the sewers.

"No, that seems to only be your thing, my beautiful Psychopath," Belle jokingly spoke, while lifting a hand to lovingly brush some of the hair back from his face. "But I **do** have something else."

"What is it?" Patrick asked, even as he was unable to help but smile at her new nickname for him. Coming from anybody else, he would've killed them, but, spoken from her beloved mouth, it was endearing, and adorable.

Belle flicked a glance over at her closet, breathing a soft sigh, before she returned her rich chocolate brown eyes to him, as she slipped one of her slender hands into his own much larger one, then nodded toward the door, while she got up from the bed. "I'll show you."

Despite his confusion, Patrick still rose to his feet at her urging, following her, while she paused to set her camera back on her desk, before continuing on to, then inside of, her closet.

Flicking on the tight within, Belle led him to the back of the walk-in area, bringing him to a halt in front of an area of the shelves, where she nodded at the very top.

"It's up there," she said, in her beautiful Australian accented voice.

Patrick gazed questioningly at her for a moment, then released his hold on her hand, in order to reach up, feeling around for whatever she was speaking of, then finding it in the box she'd hidden there days before, able to reach it much easier than she had, given his impressive height.

He flicked a glance down at her, grasping the item when she gave him an encouraging nod, then bring it down, as the two turned to face one another, where he placed it on a free area of a lower shelf, then stepped back enough to allow her room to be the one to open it.

Belle reached within the box, wrapping her fingers around the Desert Eagle, then pulled it free, the sight of the weapon causing Patrick's eyes to widen.

"Jesus, Princess," he said, before laughing softly. "That's some serious hardware. How'd you get that?"

"My Uncle, he sent it to me," Belle explained. "He's ex-Military, so he can send firearms through the mail."

"He teach you how to use it?" Patrick asked, quirking a raven brow over a blue orb, which was sparkling in pride of his badass girl.

"Among other things," Belle responded with a smile, as she offered the heavy handgun to her boyfriend, giving him another encouraging nod, when he flicked an uncertain look at her at the action.

"Shit, that's heavy," exclaimed Patrick, when he took the Desert Eagle from her, admiring the beauty of the weapon, while she reached into the box for the other item hidden in there.

"It took me a month to be able to hold it steady," Belle laughed, as her fingers closed around the box of special ammunition. "The first time I fired it, I flew back on my butt like a cartoon character."

"Sorry I wasn't there to kiss it better," Patrick said, with his trademark smirk, causing her to send him a look, before she showed him the other item.

"I asked my Uncle to make me these," spoke Belle, offering him the small box.

Patrick traded with Belle, giving her the Desert Eagle back, so that he could take the container of ammunition from her. Opening it, his brow furrowed when, inside, instead of traditional ammo, he found bullets made of silver.

"Like I said, I wasn't able to find out anything about the Clown," explained Belle. "But, every fictional monster in history all seem to have a weakness to silver, so, I figure it's a safe bet."

"Pretty smart, Princess," Patrick smiled afresh in pride at his girl, before gazing questioningly at her. "Will you show me?"

"Of course," Belle replied, sending him a playful look, while she took the box of ammo back from him, and tucked it, as well as the gun, back inside the box. "What are girlfriends for if not to teach their boyfriends how to fire a .50 caliber handgun?"

"Oh, I can think of a few things," replied Patrick with a fresh smirk and sparkle in his eyes, as he moved behind her, where he immediately wrapped a long arm around her slender waist, then lifted the other to move back her hair, exposing her slender milky white neck, which he immediately began attacking with his lips, tongue, and teeth, action that, at first caused her to giggle, before she soon began melting into his embrace.

The next morning, Belle woke up early, having set her alarm on her phone, but quickly shut it off, so as not to disturb Patrick, who was still asleep.

Getting out of bed, she shed her sleeping attire, and put on her white lace bikini, then covered it up with a cute little silk sleeveless ivory dress, with lace peaking out under the short ruffled skirt, as well as a pair of glittery rainbow and white material strass high top sneakers,

and grabbed a small pink purse, just big enough for her phone and such.

Patrick continued to slumber, so Belle climbed into bed just enough to give him a kiss on the cheek, before she got back off, and quietly made her way from the room, closing the bedroom door behind her.

"Hey, kid," came the voice of her Father, as she turned to face the hallway, and saw him coming down it from he and Katherine's room.

"Morning, Dad," replied Belle, offering him a soft smile, wrapping an arm around his waist, while his own went about her shoulders, before he bent down to drop a kiss to the top of her head, and the two headed toward the stairs.

"Where's Patrick?" Bryan inquired next, flicking a glance over at his daughter's closed bedroom door.

"He's still asleep," Belle exclaimed, while she and her Dad began down the steps together. "Is it all right if he stays here? At least until he wakes up. I'm taking the boys to the Quarry today."

"Of course, sweetheart," replied Bryan, hugging his baby girl up against his side. "I'll call Angela and James to let them know."

"Thanks, Dad," said Belle, lifting her other arm to hug him completely around the waist, while she laid her head down on his chest.

After breakfast, Belle and Bill loaded up in Bryan's blue F-150 truck, and headed out, stopping to pick up Ben, Eddie, Richie, and Stanley from their houses, before they drove to the Quarry.

Upon arriving, Belle parked, then they all piled out, grabbing their backpacks, as well as the towels they'd brought, and headed up to the jumping spot.

Belle watched, in amusement, after the boys had stripped down to their underwear, as they all took turns, while standing at the edge, hawking up a wad of spit to launch down into the water, to decide who'd take the massive leap first.

"Oh, my God, that was *terrible!*" Richie exclaimed, when Eddie, the final one to go, barely cleared the rocks they were standing on with his loogie. "I win!"

"You won?" Eddie replied in disbelief, looking over at his friend.

"Yeah!" retorted Richie, while Ben, Bill, and Stanley had to turn their heads back and forth, as though watching a tennis match, to keep up with their banter.

"Did you see my loogie?" Eddie asked, gesturing out at the water.

"That went the furthest!" said Richie, lifting his own arm to indicate his wad. "It's by distance!"

Belle playfully rolled her rich dark chocolate hued eyes, as she finished pulling off her shoes and socks, then got to work on her dress.

"Mass! It's *always* been mass!" responded Eddie.

"What is- What is mass?" inquired Richie, soon having to lift a hand to push his oversized glasses back up, as the energy he was exerting was causing them to slide down his nose.

"Who cares how far it goes? It matters how cool it looks! Like it's green or it's white, or it's juicy and fat!" Eddie explained, with several gestures from his hands.

Boys, Belle thought, as she shimmed out of her dress, revealing her slender form clad in her white lace bikini, then placed it with the rest of their clothes, then walked over to where the boys stood.

"Okay, can we decide who's first before the sun sets?" she said, lifting a slender arm to place it around Bill and Stan's skinny shoulders, as she came up between them, and, aside from the former, all three other boys were well able to appreciate the beautiful young woman in her bathing suit. She may be like a big sister or even a Mom to them, but they were teenagers, and they weren't blind. "I'll tell you what, whoever goes first, I'll hold your hand, and jump in with you."

"I'll go!" came a voice from behind them, causing the group to turn,

and see Beverly standing by their stuff, letting her bike, which she'd rode there, fall to the side, before she unbuttoned the front of her own somewhat long flowing polka dot dress, then opened it to allow it to join the others items of clothing, revealing her in her white bra and blue panties to Belle and the five teenage boys. "Sissies!"

Belle couldn't help but laugh softly, as the redhead joyously ran toward them, making the boys move back to allow her room, and she offered Beverly her hand, which she took, before the two girls leaped off of the cliff together, then down into the water with a splash.

"What the fuck?" exclaimed Richie. "Ah, holy shit! We just got shown up by two girls!"

"Do we have to do that now?" asked Stan.

"Yes," replied Eddie, before all five boys looked down into the water, as Belle and Beverly emerged from underneath the water, laughing, and smiling at one another, while lifting their hands to clear the water from their faces.

"Come on!" Beverly called up to them, before shifting her sparkling gaze back onto Belle.

"I'm so glad you came," Belle said to the redhead, as her endless chocolate tresses, now soaked, and mostly submerged in the water, moved around her like thick tendrils of wet velvet.

Beverly smiled back at her, and, before the two girls could say or do more, they were interrupted by a splash, as Bill became the first boy to jump in after them.

Once everyone was in the water, the fun began. Everyone swam around, and the water was shallow enough in places that they could all stand, splashing one another, while several games of Chicken were played.

Belle took turns holding pretty much everyone on her shoulders for it, with Eddie being the easiest, and, while she'd offer to do it for Ben, he'd declined, saying he didn't want to hurt her, so, despite her not

believing his weight would be a problem, even though he probably weighed more than she did, including being soaking wet, with her slender form, and truthfully only being a few inches taller than the boys; especially in the water, she let it go, and he mainly did her job too, acting as a lifting point for the other players, which ultimately resulted in he and Richie being the champions.

During another splashing match, in which Eddie was playfully riding Ben like he was a dolphin, Belle looked over, and saw Bill and Beverly a few feet away from the action. She couldn't help but smile softly when she saw her little brother flick a glance over at the redhead, which she noticed, but, as soon as she looked over at him, he turned away, pretending he hadn't been gazing at her.

Beverly smiled, turning her eyes onto Belle, who sent her a wink, before all attention turned onto Richie.

"Ah, fuck!" he exclaimed. "What was that? Something just touched my foot."

"Right here!" Stan said, pointing into the water, causing everybody not already there to swim over to them.

"Where?" Eddie asked, after more than a few of them had ducked beneath the water, looking for the source, but yet to find it.

"Right here! Right here!" said Richie, gesturing below the surface a few feet away, as he saw a small shadow shoot by.

"It's a turtle!" Bill explained, when he himself came up from under the water, and saw the green animal swimming.

"Let me see," Belle said, taking in a deep breath, before she ducked beneath the surface.

Keeping her eyes open under water, she saw the adorable little creature not far, and she swam toward it, reaching out once she was close enough to gently grab it, before she pushed off from the ground, emerging with the turtle.

"Here he is," Belle spoke, smiling around at Beverly and the boys, who all surrounded her to see the animal. "Aw! Isn't he cute?"

"Can I pet him?" Stan asked, to which she nodded, and he lifted a hand becoming wrinkled from their time in the water to touch the turtle's shell, an action that immediately caused it to retract its head backward.

"Aw!" Beverly exclaimed. "He's scared."

"It's just instinct," Belle reassured the group.

"How do you know it's a guy?" Richie asked, looking over at the redhead, while the others took turns touching the turtle.

"See the dent?" Beverly asked, pointing at the underside of the creature. "That means it's a male."

"Why do males have dents?" Eddie inquired, lifting his questioning gaze to Belle's beautiful face, and she shared a knowing look with Bev at his words.

"For mating, of course," replied Belle, laughing softly at all of the looks on the boys faces at her reveal.

The group soon got out of the water, and took up residence on the nearby rocky shore, where Belle plugged in her phone to a speaker set, playing music, while Beverly stretched out on a towel to soak in some rays.

Belle had released the turtle back into the water, after everyone had seen and touched him, but, at some point during the group setting up the little area to dry off, and hang out, it had re-joined them, climbing up onto the short cliffside to sun itself, a sight that caused Bill's older sister's brow to furrow slightly, but, hey, it was a free County. She just wasn't sure she'd ever seen a turtle willingly spend time with a bunch of Humans, especially those who'd scooped him up out of the water.

Tearing her gaze away from the animal, Belle had to bit her bottom lip to keep from giggling, when she found all five boys watching Beverly sunbathe in her bra and panties on her white towel, sunglasses covering her eyes.

She observed them gazing at her for a moment, before she quietly bent down, fetching an extremely small pebble off of the ground, then straightened up, and tossed it over the boys' heads, hitting Beverly with it, the tiny stone enough to draw her attention over to the group, which was when she noticed all of the males looking at her, though, upon seeing she spotted them, they all quickly averted their gazes, some even clearing their throats, and shifting in their positions.

Belle shared a knowing look and a smile with the redhead, who turned over onto her stomach on the towel, while she walked past the boys, then settled down on her own towel in front of the rock where Stan sat, and welcomed Eddie, the only one, aside from her, who'd been standing, to her side, wrapping an arm around him, then leaning down to press a kiss to the top of his dark head.

She flicked another glance at the turtle, who was still sunning itself nearby, and could've sworn she saw it looking right over at her, a sight that caused her brow to furrow a bit, before her attention was drawn to Richie, when he suddenly spoke up.

"News flash, Ben!" he exclaimed, one hand in Ben's backpack, which resided by his legs, while the other mimicked a microphone held up to his mouth. "School's out for Summer!"

"Oh, that?" Ben asked, shifting a bit where he sat to better face Richie. "That's not school stuff."

"Who sent you this?" Richie laughed, as he pulled out, to Ben's horror, and Belle's surprise, the postcard that had the poem for Beverly on it.

"No one!" replied Ben, quickly able to snatch it from his new friend, before he shared a look with Belle, who offered him a smile and a wink, actions that caused him to blush softly, while he tucked the postcard way down into his backpack, which Richie was thankfully now preoccupied with something else from, that being a dark green folder of papers.

"What's with the history project?" Eddie asked, able to see the folder's contents from where he sat with Belle, when Richie opened the item,

revealing a fair portion of the pages of library books Ben would copy and print out.

"Oh! Well, when I first moved here, I didn't really have anyone to hang out with," explained Ben, words that caused sadness to touch Belle's heart, though she didn't have much time to dwell on it, when Richie held out the folder to her, causing her to take it with her free hand, then lay it down in her lap, where Eddie opened it up for them, so she didn't have to remove her arm from around his shoulders. "So I just started spending time in the library."

"You went to the Library?" Richie spoke in disbelief. "On purpose?"

Belle barely heard the boys, once her eyes fell upon the contents of the folder, page after page of old newspaper articles and such, documenting horrible things that have happened in Derry, such as a nightclub that was burned down in the 60s, the old Ironworks exploding during an Easter Egg hunt in the early 1900s, resulting in almost 100 dead children. Honestly, what was wrong with this town? Sure, every place had its tragic history, but Derry seemed to take that to the next level.

"I wanna see," said Beverly, rising from her towel, and removing her sunglasses.

"Here you go, love," Belle replied, closing the folder and handing it to her, smiling softly when she took it, then proceeded to take up residence next to Bill with it, so the two could look at it together.

"What's the Black Spot?" Stanley asked, spotting the first page Bill and Beverly opened the folder up to.

"The Black Spot was a nightclub that was burned down in the 60s by that racist cult," Eddie explained, looking up to where his friend sat, going on when he emitted a confused, 'What?'. "Don't you watch CNN?"

Smiling softly at Eddie and Stan's words, Belle hugged the former against her side, then reached up with her free hand to the latter's nearest one, gently grasping it, and pressing a kiss to it, once he happily placed the limb in hers. "My boys are so well informed."

Eddie and Stan both blushed softly, but more than joyfully soaked up the attention from her, before theirs was drawn over to Bill, when he spoke up.

"Your-Your hair," he said, as he gazed at Beverly, who returned the gesture, her expression holding confusion at his words, as well as a touch of fear, that he was going to remark on its recent sizable cut.

"Your hair's beautiful, Beverly," Ben quickly jumped in, offering the redhead a smile.

"Oh! Right," Beverly grinned shyly in response, while lifting a hand to absently tuck some of her thick curls back behind her ear. "Thanks."

Belle couldn't help but smile afresh, as Ben looked incredibly proud of himself for managing to snatch the compliment from Bill. She found it beyond adorable that the two boys both obviously had a crush on the beautiful redhead, and were competing for her attention.

"Here," Richie spoke up, holding out his hand to Bill for the folder. "Pass it." Placing it in his lap once his friend had given it back to him, he opened it once more, causing Stan to lean over to get a better look at it, which soon resulted in Richie giving him the folder, as he'd yet to have a turn with it. "Why's it all murders and missing kids?"

"Derry's not like any town I've ever been in before," Ben explained. "They did a study once, and, it turns out, people die or disappear six times the national average."

Belle absently tightened her hold on Eddie, as well as the hand of Stan's she still grasped on her shoulder.

"You read that?" Beverly hesitantly asked, not really sure she wanted to know.

"And that's just grown ups," Ben went on. "Kids are worse. **Way**, way worse."

Belle felt a chill run up and down her spine at this, while she suddenly wished she had more than just two arms, so she could wrap all six of the young teenagers currently with her in her embrace, and

protect them from the World, especially this horrible town.

"I've got more stuff," Ben said. "If you guys want to see it."

Eddie shook his head, fear on his handsome young face, while he mouthed the word, 'No.', but everyone else, even Belle, was interested in seeing what else Ben had, so they decided to pack up, and head over to his house.

Belle drove them to Ben's home, her Dad's Ford F-150 truck having more than enough room for all of them, while Beverly's bicycle was loaded into the bed of the vehicle.

"I'll stall them," Belle whispered, as she leaned over to Ben, who sat in the front passenger seat, since he had to give directions to his house, and, when he gave her a confused look, she nodded her head back at Beverly, causing understanding to dawn across his chubby face, before he sent her a grateful look, then bolted from the truck.

Truthfully, she didn't have to stall the group, so that Ben could rid his room of anything that might embarrass him in front of Beverly, as, when all were piling out of the truck, Eddie tripped, and she spun around just in time to catch him, with Richie's help, since he'd gotten out of that side of the backseat first.

"Whoa," she exclaimed, before gazing questioningly at him. "You all right, love?"

"Yeah, I'm fine," Eddie breathed in relief, as the last thing he wanted to do after a day with his friends was go home with an injury. He'd never hear the end of it from his Mother. "Thanks, guys."

"Jesus, Ed, you're not gonna make it to 14, at this rate," Richie joked, while Bev, Bill, and Stan came around to join them, to see if the smallest member was all right.

"Shut up," Eddie replied, and Belle laughed softly, ushering all of the young teenagers forward.

"All right," she laughed. "Let's not keep Ben waiting."

Leading the way inside the house, Belle peaked inside the first door on the right once inside, and saw Ben standing by his now closed closet, one arm on the door, and the other on his hip, causing her to lift a questioning thumbs up to him, to which he nodded in response, so she moved inside, the others following her, now that the coast was clear.

"Remember he had a roller coaster?" Richie said to Eddie, the two of them, as always, having already made up from their little fight not even a moment ago. "And, like, a pet chimp, and some old guy's fucking bones?"

"Yeah!" Eddie exclaimed with a smile, while he and his friend spoke the last few words in sync, before all eyes turned on the interior of Ben's room. Pretty much every inch of which was covered in taped up copied library pages, as well as notes the boy had obviously made himself, and all split off to look at a different area.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa," spoke Richie, lifting a hand on instinct to adjust his too large for him glasses. "Wow!"

"Cool, huh?" Ben asked, with a hopeful, excited smile.

"No," replied Richie. "No, nothing cool. There's nothing cool."

"Don't listen to him," Belle whispered to Ben, before she moved over to where Bill was by their friend's desk, holding up a slide, of which there were a bunch laid out on its surface.

"Well, this is cool," Eddie spoke up, pointing at an area in particular on the wall. "Right here, dude."

"No, it's not," quickly replied Richie.

"It's not cool?" Eddie asked.

"What's that?" inquired Stanley, who stood on Eddie's other side, while Richie was on his, gesturing at a paper that seemed to be a list of signatures, below some kind of official letter.

"Oh, that?" Ben asked, moving over to them, as did Belle, coming up behind Stanley, who's shoulders she placed her slender hands on.

"That's the charter for Derry township."

"Nerd alert," scoffed Richie, before once more lifting a hand to adjust his frames.

"No, actually, it's. . . it's really interesting," Ben responded, and Belle smiled softly in pride of him for standing up for his research. "Derry started as a beaver trapping camp."

"Still is. Am I right, boys?" Richie immediately jumped in with, turning to face Eddie and Stanley, whom he offered his hand for a high five, before he blushed softly, when he saw Belle was with them, while the former shook his head at him at the joke.

"Ignore him," Belle said to Ben, moving away from Stan, in order to step behind Richie, whom she wrapped her arms tightly around, pulling him playfully back against her, actions which caused him to laugh, lifting his other hands to grasp her forearms. "Go on, Ben."

Ben offered her a soft smile of response, then did as she said. "91 people signed the charter that made Derry, but, later that winter, they all disappeared without a trace."

"The entire camp?" Eddie asked in disbelief.

"There were rumors of Indians," went on Ben. "But no sign of an attack. Everyone just thought it was a plague or something. But, it's like, one day, everyone just woke up and left. The only clue was a trail of bloody clothes leading to the Well House."

Belle followed his story with the papers on the wall. He'd found out so much about Derry in just the few months he'd been here, and, naturally, all of the tragedies had the most information on them.

Whatever happened next, she didn't know, as she went deaf to the room's happenings, when her eyes fell upon a black and white copy of an old painted portrait, one that must've been made when the first 91 people in town were signing the charter, as it showed a group of men inside an official looking building, gathered around an open book, the first in line currently writing in it with a pen. But it wasn't any of that which caught her attention.

Among the many faces in the crowd of the portrait, Belle saw one that was disturbingly out of place. That of the Clown's. It stood right there, in a room full of men, almost looking right out of the painting, Its eyes, as always, a tad off center. Unless you'd seen It before, you most likely would've never noticed It in the portrait.

Belle's fingers tightened on Richie's shirt, an action he didn't notice, while he made some comment on how they could get Derry on a TV show, and her heart rate picked up, while she gazed at the answer to one of her biggest questions: How old was the Clown?

It was clearly old enough that it had been here when Derry was first started, and she'd bet anything that It was responsible for the entire camp going missing later that Winter.

"Wh-Where was the Well House?" came Bill's voice, finally breaking through to Belle, as she'd become lost in both her horror and her realization.

Giving her head a gentle shake, her endless chocolate curls having long since dried from her time in the Quarry, she looked down at Eddie, Richie, and Stanley, and was, for once, thankful to see them playfully arguing over something, meaning they hadn't noticed her dazed state.

Smiling softly, more to herself than anyone else, she released her hold on Richie, pressing a kiss to the back of his head, then turned to face her brother, her brow furrowing, as she wondered why he was asking about the location of the end of the camp's bloody clothes trail.

"I don't know," Ben answered with a shrug. "Somewhere in town, I guess. Why?"

"Nothing," Bill replied, even as his soulful blue eyes trailed back to the papers littering the wall.

Belle's brow smoothed out, when the thought that he was inquiring because he was still searching for Georgie, hit her, though she didn't have time to explore it further, as Eddie, who now stood beside her, since all had turned to look at Bill, held up a bottle of cologne to her,

and she sent him a soft smile, while she leaned down to sniff it, then nod her head at him, when she found the scent of Ben's quite nice, since he most likely had as well, while she'd been busy gazing across at her little brother.

Not long later, Eddie, who lived just a couple of blocks from Ben's house, said he should be getting home, so Belle offered to walk him there, then come back to drive the rest to their own houses.

When all agreed, Belle told them to behave at Ben's while she was gone, then took up Eddie's hand, and the two started toward his house.

On the way, they passed by a Church, on the corner of Neibolt and Turner, and they could hear people's singing coming from within. It **was** Sunday, after all.

In front of them, the sun was beginning to set, causing Belle and Eddie's shadows to be cast on the concrete of the street they walked along.

"Oh, hey!" Eddie exclaimed, drawing Belle's attention down onto him. "I want to show you something. Watch."

Belle smiled softly, as Eddie pulled his hand free of hers, then cupped it and the other in front of his mouth, and began blowing into the limbs, causing a whistle-like sound to emerge, which he turned into a tune that she recognized as being the National Anthem, in between the usual rattling of the many pills he had in his fanny pack.

"That's wonderful, Eddie!" Belle said, reaching out to place a slender limb of her own on the back of his neck, while a bright smile of pride in him lit up her beautiful face. "Do you take requests?"

His tune was interrupted by his laughter at her words, and she offered him a soft smile, before he returned to doing the National Anthem, as she wrapped her arm around his shoulders, and the two continued walking.

It wasn't long later though, when Eddie's whistling song once more

faltered, this time at his eyes trailed up onto what they were going by. The dark, boarded up house on Neibolt Street, that looked like it belonged at least 100 years in the past. There were two fences surrounding the dead, dry front yard, one that was most likely the original iron rods, and the other that was probably put up after the house was foreclosed on, to keep out trespassers, but which had been broken into so many times, the steel was now bent backward and apart, looking like they'd melted in the sun, from both age and destruction.

"I can't believe this is still standing," Belle spoke on her sweet Australian accented voice, as she and Eddie found themselves coming to a halt in the street, both looking over at the house. "I would've bought the land just so that I could bulldoze it."

Her thoughts were interrupted however, at the sudden sound of a beeping noise, which caused her to turn her gaze down onto the boy at her side, since it was coming from his direction. "What's that?"

"Oh, it's my watch," Eddie explained, holding up the limb it resided on. "It's time for me to take my pill."

"Okay," Belle replied, offering him a soft smile, and, while he dug into his fanny pack for his medication, she took the opportunity to check her phone, pulling it from her pink purse that she had slung over the front of her chest.

She scrolled through some texts, sighing softly at the abundance of such from her friends, namely Caroline, and was just opening up her e-mail, when she noticed the air around her had gone silent.

Belle's dark brow furrowing, she turned her gaze down onto Eddie from her phone, and saw he was standing stock still, his hand holding a pill in front of his lips, while he gazed past her at the house they stood by.

"What is it, love?" she asked, flicking a glance at the building, before returning her rich chocolate gaze to the boy. She clicked off her phone, and tucked it back into her bag, then swiftly moved in front of Eddie, placing a hand on either of his shoulders, which she gave a squeeze, encouraging him to look at her, not the house. "Hey. Do you

see something?" Pausing, when he lifted his own soft brown orbs to her beautiful face, she soon went on. "Do you **hear** something?"

Eddie merely nodded, as he noticeably swallowed, and Belle returned the gesture, wrapping an arm around him, as she moved back into place beside him.

"Come on, Eddie," she said, urging him forward. "Let's get away from here."

Eddie once more nodded, taking comfort in her presence at his side, her arm around his shoulders, and happily began walking again, turning his attention down onto tucking his weekly container of pills into his fanny pack, but he was still so shaken from what he'd heard coming from that house, this horrible voice saying his name, asking him what he was looking for, that he stumbled, and soon dropped the items in his hands.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, as his container was knocked open upon hitting the ground, causing his pills to go everywhere.

"It's all right, love," Belle quickly reassured him, before the two fell into crouch positions in the street. "It's all right. We'll get them."

The two started gathering up all of the little capsules, and Belle had her back to Eddie, fetching those that had rolled behind them, when her ears were suddenly hit with a voice.

"Do you think this will help me, Eddie?" it said, and Belle spun around on her heels to see a man, if it could be called that, crouched in front of Eddie, who quickly threw himself backward in fear, clutching the very pill he'd been about to take.

The man was barely held together. Its nose was completely gone, leaving only slits, while continuous amounts of drool dripped from its seemingly numb and lopsided mouth. Its face was covered in boils, one eye was several inches lower than the other, a few patches of skin were missing, and its cheeks were sunken in, like its flesh was hanging off of what was left of its bone structure.

The clothes were dirty, tattered, and covered in what she guessed

was dried blood and pus. One leg was incredibly thin, and the other was wrapped in so much bandage that it was as thick as a tree trunk. The flesh on its hands were blackened, as if gone dead from infections, and it made a horrible gurgling sound, as it leaned toward Eddie.

Reacting on pure instinct, Belle shot to her feet, and swiftly lifted one leg to kick the man away, before she reached down, as he stumbled backward, almost falling, in order to grab Eddie, who was crawling toward the house, his face etched in complete and utter terror.

Taking up his hand, Belle turned them around, and they rushed into the dead front yard, leaping past the old iron fence, then running along the side of the decaying structure.

The man had quickly recovered, and when both she and Eddie looked back, he was only a few feet behind them. Despite seemingly moving with a limp caused by his deformed legs, he was still keeping up with them, all while growling and continuing to emit those horrible gurgling sounds, as though his lungs were filled with water, or blood.

Eddie tripped, causing Belle to stumble, since they both had a vice-like grip on one another's hands, but she was able to shake it off, reaching down once more, where she scooped up his smaller form, placing him on his feet, then taking up his little limb again, as the two started running once more.

Her heart was beating so fast, she could hear her blood rushing in her ears, and her only thought was to get Eddie away from this man, who, for whatever reason, wanted to hurt him, which she would **not** let happen.

When they reached the back yard, Belle spotted an opening in the fence, and she was just about to urge Eddie through it first, when silence, aside from their own movements, fell upon them, bringing them to a halt.

Spinning around, they saw that the man was gone, but what had replaced it was even more terrifying, at least to Belle, and she quickly wrapped both of her slender arms around Eddie from behind, using it to pull him tightly back against her body, where the frightened boy

raised his other hands to grasp desperately at her forearms.

It was the Clown.

There it stood, by the remains of the house's back porch, holding the white ribbon that was attached to several red balloons, that multiplied as they went up, making an upside down triangle-like shape.

Belle's chest rose and fell, not because she was out of breath, but simply from the fear that now overtook absolutely every inch of her. She hadn't been that afraid of the man chasing them, aside from the fear she'd felt for Eddie, but now, at discovering it'd been the Clown all along, taking yet another form, this time to shake the boy with her to his very core, she was terrified beyond belief, and it only got worse, when It slowly released Its hold on the ribbon enough to let the group of balloons rise up, revealing Its horrible white and red painted face, which soon took on that eerie odd grin.

She tightened her hold on Eddie even further at that, she could feel his body vibrating with the excursion of the run, since, unlike her, he *did* have trouble with things like that, with him possessing Asthma, as well as the fear he was feeling, as he gazed with wide eyes over at the Clown, his grip on her arms also squeezing harder, causing his fingernails to almost dig into her silky milky white flesh.

"Where you two going?" the Clown asked, his form giving an odd twitch, while Belle was once more reminded that his voice just didn't fit. It was so odd and unbalanced. "If you lived here, you'd be home by now. Come join the Clown. You'll float down there. We all float down there. Yes, we do."

It's mouth than parted even more, and the sound that came out, that of its maniacal laugh, caused Belle to flinch, while her eardrums felt as though they were being pierced by knives.

Eddie screamed, turning around in her arms, in order to wrap his around her slender waist, then bury his terrified face into her stomach, and she held him as tightly as she could, flicking a glance down at him, before her gaze, as well as the boy's, was drawn back to the back porch, when the laughter of the Clown went from ear

piercingly high, to disturbingly low and deep, and then the air was filled with the sound of several balloons popping, as, at the exact time their eyes fell upon the spot where It had been, It was gone, and the remains of the red balloons It'd been holding were falling down onto the ground.

Belle didn't wait. She somehow managed to pry Eddie off of her long enough to urge him down and through the hole in the iron fence, before she followed him, and, as soon as they were both safely through, then on the other side, now in another street, she fell to her knees in front of him, taking his hands in hers.

"Are you okay?" she asked, even as her rich chocolate hued orbs filled with a light sheen of tears, and her heart ached at the sight of a layer of his own in his eyes. She reached behind him, pulling off his backpack, then moved her hands to his still terrified face. "Are you okay? Did it hurt you? Did it touch you?"

Eddie could only shake his head, before he choked out a sob, and fell forward, throwing his arms around Belle's neck, where he squeezed tightly, as he cried into her endless chocolate tresses.

"Oh, baby," Belle gasped out, wrapping her own slender limbs about him in return, her heart shattering at having him fall apart in her embrace after what had happened.

Moving her arms, she slipped them beneath his bottom, then somehow managed to get to her feet, where she lifted him up off of the ground, holding him against her, a leg of his dangled on either side of her slender form, and he continued to clutch at her like a lifeline, sobbing all the while, as her own tears slipped free silently, but she focused her attention on him, hugging him as tightly as she could, while pressing kisses into his hair, to his temple, on his shoulder, any part of him she could reach, even as her own fear was swiftly replaced by a renewed tidal wave of pure and utter hatred toward that Clown.

First, It had taken Georgie from her, which had nearly caused her to disintegrate, then It had went after both she and Patrick, and now It was aiming Its sights on the kids. On *her* kids. Because that's what they were. Bill, Ben, Beverly, Eddie, Richie, Stanley, even her beloved

lost Georgie. They were *hers*.

If she hadn't meant it before, she most certainly did now. She was going to kill that fucking Clown, and make It sorry It ever set up Its sadistic shop here in Derry.

- Author's Note - All right, guys! There you have it! We got past the Leper scene, which, I don't know about you, but that would seriously scare the crap out of me. I don't have a fear of germs the way Eddie does, but the last thing I would want near me is that Leper. Fortunately, Belle's a lot braver than me. ;)

Anyway, I hope you guys enjoyed not only all of the stuff with the Losers, but the stuff at the beginning with her and Patrick.

Also, I added a link to Belle's outfit in this Chapter to my Profile. Let me know if you want me to start including them more frequently, 'cause a lot of her wardrobe I base on outfits I've seen in real life, though I don't have a link to her bikini.

With that, again, I hope you enjoyed, and don't forget to review! :)

9. Author's Note

Hello, loves! I'm very sorry to say that there won't be a new Chapter this weekend. Work has been insanely busy, and, therefore, I haven't had a lot of free time, nor energy, to write.

Also, the reviews for the last Chapter were very lack luster, which was really disappointing to me, so the motivation also wasn't there. A huge thanks though to **chelsnichole12**, **snowflake2410**, **Nirvana14**, **spiritgirl16**, **LoveFiction2017**, and **Otakugirl1996** for sending in reviews!

Anyway, I have five days off from work for Thanksgiving coming up, from Wednesday to Sunday, so I plan to start writing the next Chapter this weekend, then finishing and posting it during my break.

There will be a big reveal about Belle and Patrick in the next Chapter, so, please, if you're reading and enjoying this story, send in a review, and let me know!

10. Two Bills Are Better Than One

- Author's Note - Hello, loves! Thank you **so** much to Winchestergirl123, Otakugirl1996, Avenger-Ally, MedievalWarriorPrincess, SpellSlaughterWithoutLaughter, AngelicMagic01, Alex, JamieBean, and Ahlysab, who sent in a review!

Each and every one truly meant a lot to me, especially since reviews are really the only way I know you are reading and enjoying the story. So, ***please***, if at all possible, review with ***every*** Chapter!

Also, I'm VERY excited to say that Sarah Tran/sarahannabella, who "plays" Belle, is actually reading this story! She's not very far in, at this moment, because she's a busy lady, but, wow! I never thought I would be so lucky as to have someone I admire so much actually read one of my stories! She's truly becoming an amazing friend, and I'm so grateful for her!

Which reminds me. For those of you who celebrate it, I hope you had an AMAZING Thanksgiving! And I hope you know that I am truly thankful for each and every one of you! :)

I'm sorry this Chapter is shorter than usual. Thanksgiving has been a busier time for me than I thought it would. However, there's a pretty big reveal in this Chapter, as well as the introduction of a new character, so, hopefully, that makes up for the lack of length! And, next Chapter, we'll finally get around to Mike. As well as a new Monster. Or could it be an ally? You'll just have to wait and see. ;)

With that, I hope you all enjoy, and don't forget to please review!

After what happened at the house on Neibolt Street, Belle took Eddie the rest of the way home. Truthfully, she'd had to carry him most of the distance, but, once they got close enough, he'd let her put him down, though immediately took up a tight grip on her hand.

When they arrived, Eddie's Mother, Sonia, could tell something was wrong, and had eyed Belle in the way she does all of her son's

friends, but Eddie was thankfully able to convince her nothing had happened, so Belle was allowed to leave, unharmed.

Had the others not still been waiting for her at Ben's house for their rides home, Belle would've stayed with Eddie. Despite it all, he *did* have his Mother, if she could be called that. She still didn't want to leave him, though he now at least seemed all right. Children were resilient that way. They could be knocked down, and would be able to get right back up, dust themselves off, then continue on with their lives.

In many ways, Belle was still a child herself. She was 17, on the cusp of 18, and had gone through more in the past year than anyone ever had in their entire lives, but she knew, if she were even the tiniest bit older, she wouldn't have been able to come back from what happened to Georgie. Or, worse, she'd pretend like it hadn't happened, just like everyone else in Derry. As soon as another child went missing, the previous one was immediately given up on and forgotten.

Upon taking all of the others home, Belle and Bill headed back to their house, the former behind the wheel of their Dad's blue Ford F-150 truck, and the latter next to her in the front passenger seat.

Bill could tell that something was wrong with his sister. She was quiet, not that she usually a chatterbox, but the silence wasn't comfortable, and the look on her beautiful face was that of distress, even if it was mild.

"B-B-Belle?" Bill spoke up, as they continued through the streets of Derry, the windows on the truck down, allowing the warm Summer breeze inside, to wash over their faces. "You-You okay?"

Belle snapped out of her thoughts at the sound of her little brother's voice, and she flicked a glance over at him, quickly pasting a soft, what she hoped was reassuring, smile onto her beautiful face, while she freed a hand from the steering wheel, in order to reach over, then grasp his own nearest limb. "Yes, I'm fine, love. Why?"

"You-You seem distracted," Bill replied, with a shrug, even as he happily grasped her hand in return.

"Oh," Belle answered, as a soft sigh ghosted past her lush pink lips, before she attempted to cover up the real reason she was acting the way she was. "I'm sorry, love. Coming face to face with Eddie's Mother for the first time in almost a year can have that affect."

Bill laughed, nodding. "Yeah, she-she can be p-p-pretty frightening."

Belle relaxed when it looked like her brother had accepted that as the reason behind her behavior, and the two fell into a now comfortable silence, during which she began stroking the back of his head with her thumb.

"Bill," she spoke up after a moment, drawing his attention to her once more, while she carefully chose her words. After what had happened with Eddie, she was beginning to worry that Bill, and his friends, had possibly had an encounter with the Clown that she didn't know about, because she hadn't been there, like at Neibolt, and they didn't believe anyone, even her, would take them seriously. "Have you seen anything strange?"

"What do you mean?" Bill asked, his brow furrowing in confusion.

"Just. . . anything unusual," Belle answered, it now being her turn to shrug. "At home, or anywhere else in town."

"No," Bill replied, his question only running deeper at her going on.

"You would tell me if you had though, right?" she inquired next, flicking a glance over at him, and he could tell by the look on her face that she was being completely serious, though he had no idea why. "You can tell me anything."

"Of-Of course I w-w-would, Belle," said Bill, giving her hand a reassuring squeeze.

"Good," Belle responded, breathing a sigh of relief, before she offering her little brother a soft smile. "I don't want you to ever be afraid to tell me something, or think I wouldn't believe you." Using her hold on his limb, she pulled it over to her side of the truck, then lifted it to her lips, pressing a kiss to his knuckles. "I'll always be there for you."

"I know, B-Belle," Bill spoke, sending her a reassuring look, which she

returned, while she held his hand against her cheek, continuing to rub it with her thumb.

"Hey, who's car is that?" Bill asked, lifting his hand to point out the windshield, as Belle pulled their Dad's truck into the driveway, where they had little room to park the large, long vehicle, since, behind Katherine's Mini Cooper, was a brand new silver Porsche 911.

"I don't know," replied Belle, while she placed the vehicle in park behind the expensive one, then undid her seatbelt. "Though it couldn't be anymore out of place. That's at least a \$100,000.00 car."

"Do we know anyone with that kind of money?" Bill inquired next, as he too removed his seatbelt.

"Let's find out," Belle said, before the two climbed out of the truck, she pausing while her brother fetched his backpack from the second row of seats, then came around to join her, which was when she locked up their Dad's vehicle, and wrapped an arm around Bill's shoulders, leading him across the yard, up the steps of the porch, then through the front door.

"Hello?" Belle called, as she and Bill came to a halt in the foyer, where she closed the front door behind them, and locked it. "We're home!"

"Mom?" Bill added on, his brow furrowing. "D-D-Dad?"

Katherine appeared a few seconds later, coming down the hallway that led back to the kitchen, a bright smile on her beautiful face, as her eyes fell upon her children. "Hey!"

Coming up to them, she gave them both a hug and a kiss, before gazing questioningly at them, once she pulled back. "Did you have fun?"

"Y-Yeah," Bill replied, then raising a hand to point at the direction their Mom had just come from. "Who-Who's here?"

"It's a surprise," Katherine said, her smile somehow becoming even more brilliant, while her eyes sparkled with excitement, as she urged

her children past her, and, once they did so, albeit while sharing confused looks, she stepped behind them, where she placed a hand on either of their shoulders, then guided them forward, down the hall, then into the kitchen.

"Uncle Bill!" exclaimed Bill, a bright look of happiness alighting his handsome young face, when the three of them entered the room, and found their Dad standing with the man, whom he immediately ran to.

"Hey, kid!" replied Billy Russo, with a brilliant grin of his own, as he held out his arms for the teenager, wrapping them around him, once he reached him, while the boy's went about his lean muscled waist.

William "Billy" Russo was Bill's namesake. He was a very handsome young man, in his thirties, whom Bryan had mentored when he first joined the Military. Billy had had a less than transnational childhood, which resulted in him growing up in various places, before he signed up for the Marines at 18, in order to see the World, very much like Belle and Bill's Dad had, and had met the older man, that very quickly took him under his wing.

A few years ago, after a rather rough term overseas that he never liked to talk about, Billy had retired himself, and created a multi million dollar private Military company called Anvil Security, or Anvil, for short, which primarily operates in New York City, that he's now the CEO of.

That explained the \$100.00.00 car in the driveway, Belle thought, as she stood back by her Mom, and watched her brother greet the man for whom he was named, whom she'd never referred to her as Uncle herself, since, even though he was almost twenty years older than her, she didn't see him as being "old enough" for the term to come from her. They should've known it was Billy, even though they hadn't seen him since before Georgie's death.

Though, unbeknownst to the rest of her family, Billy had visited her while she'd been recuperating in England. Rupert, the man she'd gone there to stay with, whom she had no problem referring to as her Uncle, since he was as old as her Dad was, who'd helped train her to protect herself and others, once she was able enough, then provided her with the gun and silver bullets currently upstairs, had been a

mentor to Billy as well, though not as much as Bryan had, and all three had fought together in various missions, considering each other brothers.

"Wh-What are you doing here?" Bill asked, pulling back from his namesake in order to look up at the man, before laughing softly. "Things in New York get too exciting?"

Billy chuckled himself, as one large hand went into a front pocket of his slacks, and the other came to rest on the teenager's shoulder. "Not quite." Lifting his sparkling brown gaze to Belle, he went on with a nod of his head in her direction. "I heard this one was back home."

"Word travels fast," said Belle, smiling softly, while she crossed her slender arms over her chest.

"Well, it helps when you have eyes all over the World," Billy replied, returning her gentle grin with one of his own.

"Go see him, for God's sake," spoke up Katherine, lifting a hand to her daughter's back, and using the hold to give her an urge forward.

Belle sighed softly, sending her Mom a look, before she uncrossed her arms from over her chest, then walked to where the two Bills stood, offering the older one a fresh sweet smile, which he returned, before she lifted her delicate limbs, and wrapped them around his neck, having to lean up on her toes in order to do so, since, at 6'1", Billy was even taller than Patrick, her eyes slipping closed, as she hugged him tightly, while his own long lean arms secured about her slender form, his rich chocolate orbs gently shutting too, as he held her, bowing his head in order to bury his handsome face into her shoulder, in addition to her endless lush dark brown curls, where he took in a breath of her breathtaking scent.

After a moment, the two pulled apart, sharing another soft smile, before Belle moved into place on Bill's other side, wrapping an arm around her little brother's shoulders, as all eyes turned onto Bryan, when he spoke up.

"We were just discussing where Billy's going to hang his hat while he's in town," said Belle and Bill's Father. "Of course, we insist he

stays here."

"Is that all right with you two?" inquired Katherine, quirkling a brow at her children.

"Of c-c-c-course," Bill stuttered, a fresh bright smile alighting his handsome young face at the idea of his Uncle being here at the house, which still brings the haunting memories of Georgie, though it got better when Belle came home, and would now be even more so with the man he was named after there too.

Belle nodded, smiling softly herself. "Yes, of course that's all right."

"See?" Bryan said, clapping Billy on the back, while he grinned brightly. "It's settled." Wrapping his arm the young man he considered a brother, he nodded toward the front door. "Come on. I'll help you with your bags."

Billy nodded, giving Belle's little brother's shoulder a squeeze, before he followed alongside Bryan out of the house.

"So, how was the Quarry?" Katherine asked, once the two older men were gone, where she moved over to Bill, who's backpack she gently took off of him.

"G-G-Good," Bill replied, allowing his Mom to take the item. "We s-s-saw a tur-turtle."

"And the boys learned males have dents in their shells for mating," Belle added on, a bright smile tugging at the corners of her lips, while Katherine laughed softly.

"Well, you learn something new every day," their Mom said.

"How long until dinner?" Belle asked, now noticing the kitchen was showing early signs of the meal being prepared.

"Oh, it'll still be a couple of hours," Katherine replied, unable to help but think how her life has changed since she first met Billy, during a time when, if you'd told her she'd be retiring from the Military, in order to be a wife and a Mother, let alone love it as much as she does, she'd have laughed in your face. "Why?"

"I was going to go find Patrick," answered Belle, with a slight shrug of her slender shoulders.

"Okay," said Katherine, as she paused in the doorway with her son's backpack. "Just don't go too far, okay?"

"Yes, Mom," Belle replied, smiling softly at her Mother's concern, which she honestly didn't blame her for, after everything that's happened in just the few short days she's been home after almost a year away.

Belle climbed back into her Dad's blue Ford F-150, and paused to text Patrick to find out where he was. Once he responded that he was at the park, she started up the truck, then headed over there.

Upon arriving at the park, which was the large open grass area in the center of town, that contained a big lumberjack statue, and was where festivities were held, such as the upcoming Fourth of July one, Belle parked the truck, then got out, and made her way along the sidewalk.

Once she stepped past the trees that lined one side of the area, she saw Patrick. He was in the center of the field, at one of the green benches that littered the park, and he wasn't alone. He was with Henry, Belch, and Victor, the latter most soon pointing over, as her boyfriend's back was to her, drawing his attention to her, and, once Patrick saw Belle, he jumped off of the back of the bench, and started over to her.

Truthfully, Belle was a little surprised to see him back with the three. She hadn't expected him to become a completely new person overnight, but, given Patrick had called them "entertainment" and not actual friends, she also didn't think he'd be going back to them, let alone the very next day. But, so long as they didn't hurt anyone, it was, truthfully, fine by her. He couldn't be with her 24/7, after all, much as he'd like to.

Also, after the events of the past few hours, Belle quickly forget about the company her boyfriend was continuing to keep, as she was simply so glad to see him, and therefor all complaints about Henry, Belch,

and Victor being several feet away quickly vanished.

"Hey, Princess!" Patrick greeted with a bright smile, reaching her quickly with his long legs, and, once he got close enough, saw the expression on her beautiful face, one of slight distress, a sight which caused the happiness to swiftly disappear from his own handsome visage. "What's wrong?"

Belle merely reached out, slipping her slender arms below his own lean muscled ones, and wrapping them tightly around him, causing him to immediately do the same, securing a limb about her tiny form, while his other large hand to lift to grasp the back of her neck through the veil of endless chocolate curls, as he held her securely against his body.

"It's okay," Patrick said, his first instinct being to comfort her, and be there for her. "It's okay, Princess. I've got you." Turning his head, he pressed a kiss to the side of hers, then moved his hand up to cradle it in its huge grasp.

"Patrick," Belle replied, pulling back enough to look up into his handsome face after a moment, her hands coming to rest on either side of his waist. "I saw It again. I saw the Clown."

"The Clown?" asked Patrick, his brow furrowing in confusion. "What Clown?"

Belle's own brows knitted together at this, and she gave her head a gentle shake. "The-The Clown. The one that attacked us in the sewers. The one that killed Georgie."

Patrick's face continued to hold a look of question, before, after a few seconds, smoothing out in realization. "Oh! Right."

Belle's confusion and concern was not alleviated however. How could he have not know what she was talking about? Maybe he'd been enjoying some beers with Henry, Belch, and Victor.

"Where? What happened?" Patrick continued, his brow furrowing once more, though now in worry for his girl.

"It was at the house on Neibolt Street," Belle answered, shaking off

her confusion for now. "I was walking Eddie home, and It attacked us."

"What?" exclaimed Patrick. "Now Kaspbrak's seen It too?" He sighed, when she nodded. "Fuck." Pausing, he flicked a glance away from her, then returned his gaze to hers, where he wrapped an arm around her, pulling her to him once more, causing her to lift her slender hands to his back. "What do you want? What do you need?" Pulling away, he lifted a large hand to gently stroke one side of her beautiful face with his thumb. "You want to get out of here?"

Belle's brow had furrowed afresh when her boyfriend had hugged her. Gazing past him, over her shoulder, her eyes had fell upon Henry, Belch, and Victor, and she saw that none of them had anything with them, meaning they either hadn't been drinking, or had done so somewhere else. Plus, she couldn't smell any alcohol on Patrick's breath.

"Uh," Belle said, still thrown off by the fact that he'd seemingly completely forgotten about the Clown. "You know what? I should get home. Uh, a friend of my parents' is visiting, so I know Mom will want me for dinner." Pasting the softest smile she could on her beautiful face, she gestured back at Henry, Belch, and Victor. "You stay. Have fun. Just be careful."

Patrick chuckled softly, leaning in to press a kiss to her forehead. "Don't worry, Princess. We'll be good. They get the Losers are off limits." Belle nodded, trying to brighten her smile as best she could, before he quirked a brow at her, as he went on. "I'll see you later?"

"Yes, absolutely," Belle replied, with a nod, and she shared a last smile with her boyfriend, before he turned, then strode back over to where the three others were waiting for him.

During the drive back to the house, Belle's mind was a whirl with confused thoughts. Why had Patrick forgotten about the Clown?

Sure, there were the usual possibilities. He'd been drinking with Henry, Belch, and Victor, even though she hadn't seen any alcohol with them at the park. He hadn't properly heard her. He didn't

associate the thing that attacked him in the sewers as a Clown first, since his primary experience was with a horde of the missing children as Zombies. They were all possible. And they were all more comforting than what she thought next.

What if he was forgetting like everyone else in Derry?

Patrick *had* lived in Derry his entire life, and, as far as Belle knew, he'd never been outside of the city limits. Plus, his mind was vulnerable, from whatever mental illness he suffered from, though Caroline just called him a "psychopath".

What if Patrick was succumbing to the same forgetfulness everyone in the town suffered from? Where they didn't notice all of the evil the Clown brought to it. Where, whenever a new child would go missing, the previous one was instantly written off.

Pulling the truck into the driveway, Belle parked, sitting back in the seat for a moment, after turning off the engine, before her gaze was drawn to the house, which was illuminated by the lights turned on inside, since the sun was beginning to set.

Climbing out, she locked up the vehicle, then headed inside. As soon as she opened the front door, then stepped into the warmth of the house, her ears were hit with the sounds of laughter, as well as pans, plates, silverware, and other such items clinking together, while her nose filled with the delicious smells of her Mom's cooking.

Following the noises, Belle soon came to a halt in the kitchen, where she saw both of her parents, her little brother, and Billy, making dinner. Well, Katherine was preparing the meal, and Bill seemed to be helping, while both men were enjoying a beer, in between sneaking bites of food while her Mom wasn't looking.

Bryan chuckled and Bill laughed, when Katherine caught Billy grabbing a baby tomato out of the salad, and she playfully smacked him with the kitchen towel in her hand, as he popped the item into his mouth, jokingly ducking out of her grasp, while he did so.

A soft smile lit up Belle's beautiful face, while her heart fluttered with joy, at the sight of her family, and Billy soon took notice of her, as he

chewed the baby tomato, while leaning back against the counter he stood by with one hand, the other holding his beer, causing him to send her a gentle grin, which she returned, as well as a nod of his head, and a "Cheers" type of gesture with his drink, before Belle turned, then headed back down the hall, and upstairs to her room, her phone ringing in her pocket, as she went.

Fetching it, Belle flicked a glance at the screen to see who it was, then pressed "Accept", and lifted the item to the side of her beautiful face. "Hey, Bon."

"Hey, Ellie," came Bonnie's voice in greeting on the other end of the call, before her tone took on a bit of a concerned edge. "You all right?"

"Yes, I'm fine," Belle did her best to reassure, as she stepped into her room, then moved over to sit down on her bed. "Why?"

"You just sound a little off," replied Bonnie.

"Well, I promise I'm okay," Belle once more lied, reaching down with her free hand to pull off one shoe, before she switched tasks with her delicate limbs, in order to remove the other. "So, what's up?"

"Nothing," Bonnie answered, and she could almost hear the shrug in her tone. "I just miss you. I haven't seen you since your first night back in town."

"I know, love," Belle sighed, while she dropped her second shoe to the floor with the first, then sat up on the side of her bed. She'd been so preoccupied with Bill, her parents, Patrick, and the others, not to mention the damn Clown, that she hadn't even talked to her best friends, except over text, since they'd come to the house three nights prior. "I'm so sorry. It's just taking me longer than expected to settle back in."

"You don't have to apologize, sweetie," said Bonnie. "I understand. We all do. But, I was hoping I could steal you tomorrow. If you're free."

"Sure," responded Belle, before her dark brow furrowed. "What'd you have in mind?"

"Oh, you know, the usual, coffee, shopping," Bonnie said, causing Belle to laugh softly. "And a trip outside of town to my Grandfather's farm."

"That's not a part of our familiar routine," Belle answered.

"I know," sighed Bonnie. "But Mike's really having a hard time settling in, and I know he'd love to see you. Grandpa too."

"Of course," replied Belle, a fresh soft smile alighting her beautiful face. "I'd love to see them too."

"Great," said Bonnie. "I'll pick you up tomorrow then. Around 10:00am?"

"Sounds good," answered Belle. "Goodnight, love."

"Night, beautiful," Bonnie replied, and Belle laughed sweetly once more, before both girls hung up their end of the call.

She set her phone down on her nightstand, plugging it in to charge, then sat back, a soft sigh soon slipping past her lush pink lips, as her mind, specifically the thoughts in it, returned to Patrick.

Belle knew, were she able to think selflessly, she would be happy to hear he was possibly forgetting about the Clown. After all, what kind of person would she be if she wanted someone she loved to know of such horrors? That was why she had vowed to never tell Bill the actual circumstances of Georgie's death.

But, she could only think selfishly right now, and how, if Patrick was indeed like all the others in Derry, she would lose the one person she had to talk about the truth with. If she didn't constantly remind him about the Clown, she would, once again, be alone in all of this.

"Hey," came a voice, drawing Belle out of her thoughts, and causing her to look up to see Billy standing in her doorway, leaning against the frame, his beer still in one hand.

"Hi," she replied, offering him a soft smile.

"Dinner's ready," Billy said, quirked a dark brow questioningly at

her. "You coming?"

"Yes," answered Belle, her soft smile brightening, as she stood up from her bed, then walked over to join him in the entrance to her room. Her thoughts could wait. Right now, mostly like primarily due to the man's presence, the Denbrough house felt lighter, warmer, and full of happiness and love than it had in almost a year, and she was going to enjoy it. "Let's eat."

Smiling softly himself, Billy fell into place beside her, and the two headed downstairs to join Bryan, Bill, and Katherine.

- Author's Note - All right, loves! There's the new Chapter. Again, I apologize for it being short. But, we introduced a new character, who'll become VERY important to the story, and we had a big, pretty heartbreaking reveal about Patrick.

The character of Billy Russo is based upon a character of the same name, portrayed by Ben Barnes, on the Netflix original series "The Punisher", which is an excellent show, and I defiantly recommed checking it out. In the meantime, I've added a picture of the character to my Profile for you all, so be sure to go have a look at him!

And, with that, I hope you all enjoyed the new Chapter, and **PLEASE** let me know what you thought in a review! :)

11. Skinwalker

- Author's Note - Hello, loves! A HUGE thanks to **Otakugirl1996**, **Avenger-Ally**, **chelsnichole12**, **MedievalWarriorPrincess**, **LoveFiction2017**, and **Ahlysab** for reviewing!

Once again, I seem to be hearing from less of you, even though more than 200 people visited the last Chapter alone!

I'm sure part of it is because the IT fandom has kind of died down, but I'm hoping it'll be renewed once the movie comes out on DVD and all soon! I've already pre-ordered my copy.

If possible, I'm more dedicated to this story than I was when I first started it, with new ideas for it having come to me, so it really breaks my heart when I only hear from a couple of you. Which is why I can't stress this enough, PLEASE review as often as you can!

This Chapter we finally get to Mike! And we're introduced to. . . something else. ;) So, I hope you all enjoy, and *please* review if you do!

After dinner, which had been full of good food, great company, laughter, discussion, smiles, looks, and all around happiness, Belle and Bill offered to clean up, allowing the three adults to retire to the living room with drinks for further enjoyment.

Upon completing all of the necessary tasks, Bill went to join his namesake and their parents, while Belle opted to go upstairs, shower, then head into her room, where she got dressed in her sleeping attire, and took her nightly medications.

She knew she didn't need them. Perhaps a small bit of her had when she first returned to Derry, but now that she'd since had her fair share of encounters with the Clown, she was completely sure the pills weren't necessary.

Still, Belle took them. At the very least, she could use those that would help her sleep after the day she'd had.

Turning, she was just about to head back to her bed, climb under the covers, turn on the TV, which was mounted on the wall opposite her bed, while all of its necessary accessories were on a stand below it, and find something to watch, that would most likely mean connecting to Netflix, when her eyes fell upon the group of balloons still by her closet door, not deflated in the slightest, despite them being almost a week old.

Sighing, Belle reached out, grabbing them all by the white ribbons they were attached to, which had weights on the ends, with one hand, while the other swung open the entrance to her walk in closet.

Stepping inside, she took them all the way to the back, even moving aside the clothes that hung there, in order to make room for the things that seemed to be taunting her with their constant swaying, and refusal to lower, so that she'd have the excuse to throw them out.

Feeling relieved that at least the balloons were now out of sight, and therefor hopefully out of mind, Belle turned to leave the closet, but found her rich dark chocolate hued gaze drawn to something else, that of a pristine white lab coat hanging at the end of the long line of clothing. It had been a gift from her parents, while her friends had gotten her a Littmann stethoscope, which was currently tucked away on one of the shelves, when she'd first received early acceptance into Harvard.

Coming to a halt by where the item of clothing hung, she reached out to touch the nearest sleeve, rubbing the crisp cuff between her slender fingers, as her mind was filled with memories of the day she'd gotten it. She remembered how happy she'd been, how excited she was for her future.

But she wasn't that girl anymore. The girl who wanted to go to Harvard, to become a Doctor, was gone. She'd died with Georgie. And the girl she was now didn't have a clue what she desired once the Summer was over. All she could think about was killing the Clown. She'd yet to consider what she'd do with her life, were she to survive, that is, after it was all finally done with.

Releasing a gentle breath of sadness, Belle left the closet, shutting the door behind her, then padded silently over to her bed, which she

climbed up onto, not noticing the figure standing in her open bedroom entrance, until it spoke.

"Hey," said Billy, drawing her gaze up to him, once more leaning against a side of the door frame, a beer clutched in one large hand.

"Hi," replied Belle, offering him the strongest soft smile she could muster.

"Penny for your thoughts?" Billy asked, pushing off of the entrance, then stepping into the room, and starting across it toward where she sat on her bed.

Belle laughed gently. "I'm afraid my thoughts are much more expensive tonight."

"Well, fortunately for you, my funds are limitless," answered Bill, speaking of his multi million dollar company, as he sat down beside her, and offered her his beer.

Belle smiled, taking the a little over half full labeled dark brown glass bottle from him, and tipping back a small drink from it, before handing it back to its owner. It wasn't as though she'd never drank before, though it was usually wine or champagne on a special occasion, such as the holidays. Plus she had, up until recently, been a High School student, so she'd drunk her fair share of beers, and could defiantly use one after the day she'd had.

"Rough day?" Billy inquired next, taking his beer from her hand when she extended it to him, then lifting it to accept a new swig of it himself.

"Yes," Belle laughed softly, as she began absently fiddling with some of the long lush curls of hers resting in her lap. "You could say that."

"You want to talk about it?" asked Billy, leaning back on her bed, so that he was propped up on his elbow on his side, facing her, his drink now held loosely between both hands.

Belle followed him with her eyes, unable to help the feeling of warmth and contentment that washed over her in his presence. He had that affect on her. Plus, she wasn't blind. He was an extremely

attractive man, always being called "pretty" in some way, and even had the nickname of "The Beaut", plus he could out charm Prince Charming. Then there was the fact that he was very intelligent, not everyone can build a successful private Military company from the ground up, especially an orphan, as he was, and he was a caring soul.

She'd be lying if she said, despite him being a fair bit older than her, and one of her parents' best friends, she never saw him *that* way. Even when she was with Patrick before. And, if she were continuing to be honest with herself, she also knew her Mom and Dad would prefer her with someone like Billy, though maybe not actually him, than her current boyfriend. She was also aware that she *should* be with another, but she was holding onto Patrick, or, at least, was trying to.

Maneuvering on her bed, Belle put her back to her pillows, and crossed her legs Indian style in front of her, so that she was looking at Billy stretched out across the center of her bed, his dark head on the hand he had propped with his elbow.

"I think I'm losing my boyfriend," she admitted with a sad, soft little sigh.

Billy knew all about Patrick, or, at least, the recent activities between he and Belle, since her parents had filled him in today. To be honest, the teenager wasn't his favorite topic of conversation, but, if she needed him to listen to her discuss him, he would happily do so. "You just got him back. Why do you think you're losing him?"

Belle flicked a glance over at her room's windows, which she noticed were locked, and had the curtains drawn. Her Mom must've done that while she'd been gone earlier, since she instinctively at least left the window unlocked for Patrick.

"Because I think holding onto him would be bad for both of us," Belle said, returning her gaze to Billy, while choosing to leave off the reasons about Patrick involving the Clown, and Its sadistic hold on the town of Derry, specifically the people in it. "We're *so* different. And that was fine before, when we were just kids, when we didn't have life outside of High School to think about, but, now. . ." She trailed off.

"So, you don't see him following you to Harvard?" inquired Billy, with a slight quirk of a dark brow.

Belle sighed, slumping back against her pillows. "Truthfully, I don't even see myself going to Harvard anymore."

"Why?" Billy asked, his brow now furrowing, while he pushed himself up into a sitting position to better give her his full attention.

"I'm not that girl anymore," Belle admitted, with a shrug of her slender shoulders. "The girl that wanted to go to Harvard, to become a Doctor, she died with her little brother. It's impossible for me to see a "traditional" life in my future, because my life is far from normal anymore."

"Then what **do** you want to do?" said Billy, going back to quirking a brow, as he lifted his beer to his lips for a sip. He had a vague idea of what Belle was talking about. When he'd visited her in England, they'd spent a fair share of time together, and had become closer than they'd ever been, even growing near to being more than just friends, or whatever kind of family they were with him being like a brother to her parents, but nothing had happened, though he knew from their talks during that time that the story of what had happened to Georgie didn't depict the real events of his death.

"I don't know," Belle replied, offering him a soft smile, before she breathed a gentle sigh. "I'll be 18 soon, and I'll gain control of my money. So, I guess, technically, I can do whatever I want. I get more modeling and ballet offers every day. People are now even becoming interested in my photography. I could travel the World, live where I please, do what I please. Be free, for the first time in my life."

She knew she wouldn't be going anywhere until she'd dealt with the Clown once and for all, which she hoped she'd survive. She was not leaving Derry until the people she loved were safe from It, and she also realized she'd have to come back to visit, but the idea of simply traveling the World was suddenly very pleasing to her. Though that wasn't a situation she saw Patrick in, and that thought caused the joy to die from her beautiful face, something Billy noticed.

"Well, you know you're always welcome in New York with me," he

said, maintaining his hold on his beer, while he used the other arm to move himself up along the bed, until he was settled beside her against the pillows, his long legs outstretched in front of him, crossed at the ankles, and Belle send him a fresh soft smile at his words.

"I'm really glad you're here, Billy," responded Belle. "I've missed you."

"Yeah?" answered Billy, with a fresh quirk of his dark brow. "I've missed you too, Belle."

"How long are you going to stay?" Belle asked, even as she dreaded hearing the answer. Even if it was a month from now, she already hated thinking about him leaving.

"How long do you want me to?" Billy replied with, a smile tugging at the corners of his lips.

"Forever," Belle said, after a brief pause, before she offered him a sweet grin of her own. "Does forever work for you?"

Billy returned her smile with one of his own, then laid his bearded cheek against the top of her dark silky head, when she leaned over to rest it on his nearest shoulder, and the two sat like that for a moment, before he spoke up once more.

"If you're not too tired," he said, going on when she lifted her gaze to meet his, which was sparkling, as he nodded at her mounted TV. "You think you can take me?"

"Sure," Belle replied with a soft smile, knowing he was talking about the two of them battling each other in a video game, specifically Call of Duty. She had a really nice gaming set up, along with everything else, in her room, since she had two brothers, though now was down to one, and a Dad, who all loved to play, and, truthfully, she did too. Even her Mom would partake. "Bring it on, Soldier."

Chuckling softly, Billy handed her his beer, then climbed off of the bed, in order to fetch the game, then turn on the set up, and Belle watched him with a soft smile, while taking another sip from his drink.

Belle and Billy ended up falling asleep in the former's bed, after a lengthy Call of Duty session, while watching a show on Netflix about a group of children that take on Supernatural entities.

When Belle woke up in the morning to get ready, since Bonnie was coming to pick her up at 10:00am, Billy wasn't in the bed with her. He was an Early Bird, both from his time in the Military, and now from being the CEO of his multi million dollar company.

Climbing from bed, Belle got dressed, put some stuff into her backpack, then went downstairs to get something to eat, before she brushed her teeth, and finished up preparing for the day.

Bonnie arrived just as Belle did so, and, after being introduced to Billy, the two girls bid everybody, "Goodbye.", then got into Bonnie's silver Toyota Prius, and headed off.

"I invited Alec and Emma to meet us at the farm," Bonnie spoke up, after the girls had stopped at Starbucks for their morning beverages. "I hope that's okay."

"Of course," replied Belle, even as she realized she'd completely forgotten that Alec, Emma's boyfriend, had arrived home for the Summer over the weekend.

"It's all right if you forgot, Ellie," said Bonnie, as though reading her best friend's mind. "You've had a lot going on."

"I didn't forget," Belle answered, smiling softly, while her rich dark chocolate hued eyes sparkled with mirth. "I just haven't thought about it. There's a difference."

"Sure," responded Bonnie, and the two laughed, before she went on. "So, how are things going with Patrick?"

Belle's happiness quickly died from her beautiful face at that, which her friend, despite concentrating on the road as she drove, noticed.

"I'm sorry, sweetie," apologized Bonnie. "I figured you two were on the way to getting back together, after surviving that bear attack."

"We are. I mean, we did. It's just. . ." Belle paused. Even though she

was almost positive that Bonnie would forget, the same as everyone else, even Patrick, which was the current problem, or solution, she wasn't sure which yet, she still didn't want to risk telling her friend the truth, so she merely offered her the strongest smile she could muster, while she finished her statement simply. "It's complicated."

"I'm sorry, Ellie," Bonnie repeated with a genuine, gentle sigh of sadness. She may not be Patrick's biggest fan, none of Belle's friends really were, but, before they broke up, he had made her happy, which was all those that loved her could ask for. Quirking a brow over a sparkling emerald orb, Bonnie went on. "Does the complication have anything to do with your parents' gorgeous millionaire friend?"

"Billy?" asked Belle, a bit incredulously, as she flicked a glance over at her friend. "What? No. I told you, he only got here yesterday."

"I'm just teasing you," giggled Bonnie, before she spared a look at her friend, wiggling her eyebrows playfully, while she went on. "But, seriously, that boy is gorgeous."

Belle emitted a sound that was a soft laugh mixed with a scoff. Bonnie had been a smiling, happy mess when she met Billy at her house.

"We'd better keep him away from Caroline," Bonnie continued. "She doesn't know how to take, 'No.' for an answer when it comes to men. Unless it's Henry Bowers."

"What?" Belle exclaimed, turning her head to look at her friend, disbelief etched across her beautiful face. "Henry went after Caroline?"

Bonnie nodded, laughing softly. "It was kind of funny to watch. And, you know, Belch still has a thing for her."

Belle rolled her eyes, while she relaxed back in her seat. "I'm sure Caroline will hook an up and coming professional football player before the first week at College is over."

"Oh, I have no doubt," Bonnie giggled. "Poor bastards at Stanford

don't know what's coming."

Belle laughed softly once more, before gazing questioningly at her friend, since she was the only one who'd yet to pick a College when she left for England. "Have you decided where you're going?"

"I'll probably join Alec and Emma at the University of Maine," sighed Bonnie. "Truthfully, I haven't given College a whole lot of thought this year. Gran will be all alone, and I won't be able to see Mike as much."

"Bonnie, you have to get out of this town," Belle said somewhat urgently. She felt like she was the Captain of a sinking ship, and was getting as many people as she could off of the boat before it was too late. The ship, of course, being Derry, and the sinking was being caused by the Clown.

"What's so wrong with this town?" asked Bonnie, laughing softly.

Belle didn't respond right away. She just sighed, and took a sip from her drink.

"Belle?" Bonnie said, her expression turning slightly concerned, as she flicked a glance at her friend from the road. "What is it, sweetie? Come on. Talk to me. I feel like there's so much you're not telling me. That you're not telling anyone."

"I'm okay, Bonnie," Belle lies, offering her friend the strongest reassuring smile she could. "Like I said, it's just taking me a bit longer than I expected to settle back into my life here. That's all."

Bonnie smiled softly, freeing a hand from the steering wheel in order to reach over, and grasp her friend's own nearest limb. "Well, we have all Summer, and we're not even a week in. So, you have time."

Belle sent her a renewed smile, grasping her hand in return, before she turned her head to gaze out the passenger side window, as the sights of Derry going by, as they drove through the town.

After doing some shopping, which truly wasn't saying much, it was a small town, after all, and they'd been buying things there for most of

their lives, Belle and Bonnie headed outside of Derry to the Hanlon farm to meet up with Alec and Emma, and visit Leroy and Mike.

As soon as the two girls crossed over the town line, signaling they were officially out of Derry, Belle felt like a massive, heavy, thick cloud had been lifted off of her. It'd been there since she'd arrived back in town a few days prior, and was now gone for the first time since then, causing her to take in a deep breath of relief and joy, then release it, as a bright smile lit up her beautiful face, and she happily took in the views outside of Derry had to offer, most of which were either large lushly forested areas, or massive fields of grazing animals and/or growing food.

When Belle and Bonnie arrived at the Hanlon farm, they found Alec and Emma waiting for them.

The pair were leaning back against the front of Charlie's, Emma's Dad, 1963 Chevrolet truck, which was a faded bright orange in color, and they both smiled when they saw their friends pulling in.

Bonnie parked her car a few feet from the other one, then killed the engine, and climbed out of the driver's seat, while Belle did the same on the passenger side.

"There she is!" Alec exclaimed, pushing off from the hood of the truck, while offering Belle a bright smile.

"Hey, sweetie!" called Emma, moving from where she'd been with her boyfriend, though more slowly, allowing him to get to their best friend first, as he hadn't seen her since the Summer before.

"Hi, Alec," replied Belle, smiling in return, as she moved to meet him, soon lifting her slender arms to hug him, while his own long lean limbs wrapped around her in return, and he turned his head to press a kiss to the side of hers. "Happy to be home?"

Alec flicked a glance over at Emma, when she came up beside him, his smile brightening, before he returned his eyes to Belle. "Couldn't be happier."

Belle laughed softly, before she and Emma embraced, and Bonnie did

so with Alec.

"How are you?" Emma inquired, her dark blond brow furrowing, while she gazed questioningly and in concern at Belle, when they pulled apart. "How's Patrick?"

Bonnie made a slashing motion across her neck, when she and Alec separated from their own hug, causing Emma to quickly fall quiet, but Belle laughed, as she saw her friend's actions out of the corner of her eye.

"It's okay, Bonnie," Belle reassured, flicking a glance at her dark haired friend, before turning her gaze onto the blond one. "Patrick's fine."

"You got back together with that lunatic?" Alec asked, a bright smile still on his handsome face, which quickly faded when Bonnie and Emma sent him shocked, warning looks, and his girlfriend accompanied hers with a swat to his torso.

"Alec!" Emma exclaimed, her eyes wide, as she looked up at him.

"What?" Alec inquired, shrugging out with his arms, while his smirk returned. "It's what he is. You girls just don't see it 'cause he's good looking."

Bonnie rolled her eyes, while Emma scoffed. Belle, however, did truthfully feel a bit uncomfortable. "Um, how about we just don't talk about Patrick anymore today. Okay? Let's have fun."

"You got it," said Emma, lifting a hand to stroke her friend's nearest arm.

"Sounds good to me," added on Bonnie, with a nod of her dark silky head.

"The less I hear about him, the better," spoke Alec, causing both Bonnie and Emma to roll their eyes, as well as scoff, while Belle just sent everyone a soft smile of gratitude, and, thankfully, a few seconds later, the four looked over to see Mike running toward them, his handsome young face alit with a bright smile.

"Bonnie!" he exclaimed, heading straight for his cousin, whom he soon threw his arms around, causing her to hug him back, her beautiful visage glowing with joy, as she did so.

"Hey, little man!" Bonnie said, soon bowing her head to press a kiss to the top of his head.

"I'm so glad you're here," replied Mike, pulling back in order to look up at her, before his eyes turned onto the others, and his bright smile returned with he saw Belle. "Hey, Belle!"

"Hi, love," Belle answered, laughing sweetly, while offering the teenager her arms, which he immediately stepped into, lifting his own limbs to wrap around her waist. "Wow, you're getting big! You're almost as tall as me now."

"Which isn't actually saying much," said Alec, who now stood with a limb slung around Emma's slender shoulders, and his girlfriend once more sent him a look, then gave him a swat across his stomach.

"Ha ha," Belle replied flatly, as she narrowed her brow at her friend, while Mike went over to embrace Emma.

"Come on," Mike said with a fresh smile, upon releasing his hold on the blond, then gesturing the four to follow him, which they did, across the front yard, which had the main house on one side, and a forest line on the other, while the actual farm area was several yards from it, to the left, across a bit of an open field, and up a small hill. "Grandpa's in the barn."

"Grandpa!" Mike called, as he led Belle, Bonnie, Alec, and Emma into the barn, where Leroy was with a couple other workers. "Look who's here!"

"Hey!" Leroy replied, handing a piece of equipment he'd been inspecting to one of his employees, before moving over to the group, pulling a rag from the back pocket of his pants, in order to wipe his hands on it. He hugged Bonnie, who was his Granddaughter, first, then Emma, and shook Alec's hand, before his gaze turned onto Belle, whom he smiled softly at, before offering her his arms, which she

happily went into, returning his smile, as she did so. "How you doing, honey?"

"I'm good," answered Belle, even as she wondered how many times she's said that recently, lifting a hand to tuck a stray long chocolate curl behind her ear, when she and the older man pulled apart. "How are you? How are things going here?" She flicked a glance around the farm, while she spoke.

"Well, truth be told, things could be better," Leroy sighed in response. "We've got some kind of problem Wolf in the area. It's been killing our sheep during the night. We found another two this morning."

"I'm sorry, Leroy," Belle answered, her brow furrowing in concern.

"Ah, ain't nothing we won't recover from once we hunt the bastard down," said Leroy, waving a hand in the air, before flicking a glance back at his workers. "Some of the boys and I are gonna go out looking for it today, so, you guys stay in the house until we get back." He quirked a brow, as he pointed a warning finger at the group, namely Mike. "You got me?"

"Yes, Sir," both Mike and Bonnie replied, while Emma and Alec nodded.

"Could you use another hand?" Belle inquired. "I know my way around a firearm."

Leroy's brow quirked once more, while her friends and Mike gazed at her in surprise and disbelief.

Alec laughed. "What? Since when, Ellie?"

"My Dad started to teach me," Belle explained, flicking a glance over at her friend. "And my Uncle continued when I was staying with him in England."

"I don't know, honey," sighed Leroy, taking off his baseball cap in order to rub his head. "I don't want anything to happen to you. You've been through so much already."

Belle bit back a sigh. She was so tired of people treating her like she

was some porcelin doll, as though any little thing could break her. "I promise I can handle myself."

"She has handed Henry Bowers' his own ass twice now that she's been back in town," Bonnie pointed out, sending her friend a smile and a wink.

"Really?" inquired Lerouy, his face etched with surprise, before a deep chuckle rumbled up from his chest, when all three girls nodded, since the Hanlon family had a long, nasty history with the Bowers family, most likely due to the latter's ignorant racism. "Well, in that case, we'd be happy to have you come with us, Ellie."

Despite agreeing to let Belle come on the hunt, and arming her with a rifle, Leroy still insisted on one of his farm's workers going with her, when the group broke off once in the woods in order to cover more ground at a faster pace. It was an older man of Native American origin named Tommy.

Belle had no intention of shooting and/or killing a wolf, if there was indeed one out here. She came with the hope that she could scare it off. She loved animals, and she didn't want to see any die. So, if she could prevent the Wolf's, she would, even with her current chaperone accompanying her.

"It's nice to finally meet you, Belle," said Tommy, as the two made their way through the woods, himself carrying a shotgun. "I've heard a lot about you, mainly from Mike and Leroy, but Bonnie speaks highly of you when she visits."

"Thank you, Tommy," Belle replied, with a soft smile. "I defiantly miss Mike. He used to come over to our house all the time when he lived in Derry."

"It's defiantly been hard on the boy," spoke Tommy. "First losing his parents, then having to move out here. Farm life isn't for everyone."

"How long have you been working here, Tommy?" Belle asked, flicking a glance over at the man.

"Oh, I'd say I've been here about ten years," answered Tommy.

"Wow," Belle exclaimed. "What brought you to Maine? You're not originally from here, are you?"

"No," Tommy chuckled. "No, I'm from out West. I was born and raised on a Reservation. But, once my family died, my wife and my boy, I just. . . needed a change of scenery, you know." He did his best to offer the girl a soft smile, but the action didn't quite meet his brown eyes, which were very obviously sad, and heavy with the burden of having lost his family.

"I'm so sorry, Tommy," Belle said, her heart aching at the idea of the man being forced to part from his wife and child. "May I ask what happened to them?"

"Car accident," replied Tommy, flicking an absent glance at the ground. "We'd been at my wife's family's for a Christmas party. I'd had a few too many to drink, but I still insisted I was all right to drive." Sighing softly, he lifted his eyes to look ahead of them, then went on. "The next thing I knew, we'd gone off the road, and hit a tree. My son, he was, uh. . . He was killed on impact, but my wife, she'd. . . She'd gone through the windshield. I found her in a ditch. I called for help, but she was gone by the time it arrived. Died in my arms."

Belle came to a halt, moving one hand from the rifle in her grasp, in order to reach over, and grasp the Native American man's nearest arm, when he too stopped. She didn't know what to say. She always hated people saying they were sorry when something happened to you. Not only wasn't it their fault, but she knew they actually meant they were just glad it hadn't happened to them.

"Oh, don't mind me, Belle," said Tommy, offering the young girl a bit of a stronger smile than the one he'd given her before. "Just the ramblings of an old, lonely man, that's all."

Belle watched sadly as he continued on past her at that, and she soon followed behind him, the two walking in silence for several moments, clutching their guns at the ready, eyes scanning the woods, which was quiet, aside from the usual chirping of the birds, and other

animal noises.

Suddenly, even the normal sounds of the forest were gone, and it was as if Belle and Tommy had walked straight into the vacuum of space. Belle felt like she'd inexplicably gone deaf, but realized she hadn't, when she was able to hear the man beside her.

"I saw something over there," he whispered, and she looked over at him, seeing he'd lifted a hand from his shotgun in order to point to the left. "Cover me?"

Belle nodded, tightening her hold on her rifle, then watching once more, as Tommy made his way from her. She was just about to follow after him, albeit back a few feet, when she caught sight of something out of the corner of her eye.

Shifting her gaze to the right, a soft smile lit up her beautiful face when, from behind a nearby tree, one maybe 6 feet from her, she gazed upon what looked like the hind leg of a Wolf, and a big one.

Flicking a glance back at Tommy, whom she now realized must've simply heard a squirrel or something, she shouldered her rifle, then turned, and began slowly walking toward the tree, swooping down a bit in order to appear as unthreatening as possible to the animal.

"Hello, darling," Belle spoke in her sweet, soft Australian accented voice. "What are you doing back there? Come on out. It's all right. I won't hurt you."

She saw the leg move, in that the muscles and tendons in it twitched, and the sight caused her smile to brighten.

"That's right," Belle continued encouragingly, lifting one of her slender hands, as she would to greet any other dog. "Come on, love. Let me see you."

She was not prepared for what was actually behind the tree, because it was most defiantly not any canine she'd ever seen before.

From behind the tall oak, stepped out not a Wolf, but a . . . thing. It was absolutely massive, easily more than seven feet tall. It almost looked like a contorted coyote and even a deer mixed with a German

Shepherd. It had a pair of huge antlers sticking out of its head, a long snout that had the lips of its muzzle pulled back, revealing a full set of sickeningly long, sharp, jagged fangs.

Its body was long, thin, almost emaciated, and twisted, like the trunk of a tree that's been warped by weather and age. It stood on two hind legs, and what would be its front paws were long skinny arms, with massive hands that had unnaturally curled claws on them, sharp enough to shred flesh with one swipe.

But, despite everything, the most disturbing part of the creature were its eyes. It didn't have those of any animal, but those of a Human.

Belle felt her blood run cold, and every inch of her body froze in place, while her heart stuttered to a halt, as she felt an overwhelming sense of dread wash over her like a wave on the beach.

She gazed up at the thing in complete and utter shock and horror, not even flinching when it emitted a low growl, then took a step toward her, continuing to walk on its hind legs, like no animal could. The closest comparison was, again, that of a Human, though it was like the creature hadn't yet mastered the little nuances of acting like a person.

Belle tried to take a step back, but her legs were wobbling from fear, and they collapsed beneath her, causing her to hit the ground, where her hands splayed on the leaf, stick, and dirt covered forest floor, as she continued to gaze up at the thing, which, for whatever reason, she simply knew was not the Clown in yet another different form. This was something else entirely.

"Belle!" came a voice, that of Tommy's, when he spotted her on the ground, gazing at something in terror.

Rushing back to her, his eyes soon fell upon what she was seeing, and the sight caused him to skid to a halt. It was then that the creature emitted an unGodly-like sound, some sort of scream, but it was guttural, as though its lungs were filled with water, or blood.

Tommy's eyes widened in sheer shock, he too now frozen in place. When the thing took a long, menacing step toward him, its lips

curling back to freshly expose teeth Belle now saw were visibly stained with somewhat fresh blood, he began speaking.

She had no clue what Tommy was saying, as he was speaking in what she guessed was his Native language, but she could tell, by the manner in which he spoke, he seemed to be attempting to ward off the creature with his words, and, soon enough, the thing did just that.

It took a step back, as though being made to do so by an invisible force, its lips relaxing to cover its fangs, and it flicked a last look at Belle with its Human eyes, before disappearing back into the treeline. She could hear it turn, then take off at a running pace, once more on two legs.

Tommy rushed to Belle's side, grabbing her by her upper arm, then using the hold to haul her up to her feet.

"Are you all right?" he asked, gazing worriedly into her beautiful face.

"What. . . What was that?" Belle inquired, finally tearing her wide, terrified gaze from where the creature had been, in order to look over at the man.

"Come on," Tommy said, swinging his shotgun, which had been clutched in his hands the entire time, up onto his shoulder, then wrapping an arm around her, using the hold to urge her to turn around, before guiding her forward. "Let's get back to the farm."

Belle blindly went with him, her mind still a whirl with thoughts of what had just happened, and what that thing had been.

"Tommy, what was that?" Belle asked once more, after the two had been walking for a few moments, the man's gaze constantly sweeping the woods, as they did so, while he'd tense at every little sound they heard.

"What makes you think I know?" Tommy inquired, flicking a quick glance at her, before once more returning his still slightly widened

eyes to the forest.

"Well, you knew what to do in the face of it," replied Belle. "I don't know what you were saying, but, whatever it was, made it back off."

Tommy sighed softly, his body relaxing a bit. "We're not supposed to talk about them. It's said that just talking about them attracts their attention,"

"I believe we've already attracted their attention," Belle said. "So, what do we have to lose?"

"Our lives!" Tommy exclaimed, which brought her to a halt, while he soon sighed softly, and turned to face her. "My people," he continued, speaking of Native Americans. "We call it. . . ." He then spoke a word in the same language he'd used earlier, before switching back to English. "The closest thing it translates to in English is 'Skinwalker'."

"A Skinwalker?" Belle repeated, her brow furrowing in confusion, though she now knew for sure that the thing had not been the Clown, as the Clown always took the form of things people feared, and she'd had no idea what it was until now. Plus, they weren't in Derry. "What's a Skinwalker?"

"You just saw it," said Tommy, nodding back in the direction they'd come from, as he lifted a hand to her back, urging her to continue with him, which she did.

"I know that," sighed Belle. "But I still don't know what it is."

"According to stories, they used to be Shaman, Medicine Men, but they. . . abused their powers, so to speak," Tommy went on. "They were meant to help people. Instead, they used the gifts given to them for selfish reasons. As punishment, in death, they weren't allowed to join our ancestors, live peacefully for eternity. They were turned into Skinwalkers, forever doomed to wonder the Earth a twisted, contorted version of themselves. They can take other forms, usually those of animals or people. When they're animals, they'll never have a tail. That's how you can tell. And they never look completely. . . right. No matter what shape they take, they'll always look. . . wrong. Seem. . . off. They'll never be able to perfectly imitate something,

including sounds and voices. They can repeat things they've heard, but only the exact same way every time. It'll sound distorted, like a recording, and they'll use these things to lure people in."

"To kill them," Belle added on simply. "Do they eat them too?"

It was Tommy's turn to come to a halt, then shift to stare at her incredulously, stunned that a teenage girl was not only asking him that, but doing so in such a calm manner. Nonetheless, he gently shook his head.

"No one truly knows," he said. "The dead can't talk, honey."

Silence fell over the pair, and Tommy tilted his head back, in order to look up at the sky, which was noticeably darkening, through the forest ceiling. A few seconds after he did so, a soft rumble of thunder was heard.

"A storm's coming," he spoke after a moment. "We'd better get back to the house."

Tommy lifted a hand to Belle's back once more, and the pair began walking again.

"When we get there, I'll say a prayer," said Tommy, and his next few words were spoken in his Native language, causing Belle to send him a questioning look, so he translated to English, as before. "So the evil will forget our faces'."

Belle didn't respond. She merely remained silent, as she allowed the man to lead the way. Her mind was still a whirl, now thanks to the information he'd provided about the creature she'd seen.

According to Tommy, it was a Native American legend. So, what was it doing in Maine? Most Native American territory was out West, like where Tommy had lived up until losing his family.

Again, Belle just knew it hadn't been the Clown. But what if it was here because of the Clown? They were just outside of town, and Tommy had said the Skinwalkers used to be men, ones who abused their powers, and therefore were punished for it. What if it was guarding?

It hadn't seemed all too vicious toward them. It could've easily attacked and killed them both, but, instead, it seemed to just be trying to frighten them. Leroy said a wolf had been killing sheep, and Belle had seen blood on the creature, which, in a way, resembled a large dog, especially if it could take different forms, as Tommy told her. Why eat sheep when there was a house full of people it could lure out and consume?

What if the Skinwalker was a Guardian of sorts? Keeping the Clown within the confines of Derry, and yet, at the same time, forcing people to remain in the town too, to be Its food supply.

- Author's Note - All right, loves! There you have it! If you've never heard of Skinwalkers before, they are a very real Native American legend, and, honestly, if Pennywise were to ever come after me, one of the forms It could take to scare me would be a Skinwalker. The stories I've heard of them are truly horrifying! Feel free to look them up, if you'd like.

I've also added a picture of Emma's boyfriend, Alec, to my profile.

And, again, I hope you enjoyed, and, as always, please don't forget to review! :)

12. Author's Note (2)

Hey, guys!

Wow. Long time, no see! I hope you're all doing fantastic.

So, with "IT: Chapter Two" now out, I've been thinking about returning to this story. Would you be interested in that?

If so, since it's been quite a while since I last wrote for this story, it will have to be restarted. But, don't worry, all of the main plot points, etc. will be the same.

Also, please let me know your option on the below items:

- Would you want me to post the story here or start a new one?
- Would you want me to follow my previous path? Meaning write the first movie/portion of the story, then the second one? Or would you like me to intertwine the two tales?

Please let me know! I really hope to hear from you all!